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Echoes From Elsewhere

An Introduction To Echoes Magazine In Reactions, Facts and Issues From All Over The World

European Union 'needs values' to reinforce integration

By Jonathan Luxmoore, Warsaw, 7 June

A leading Roman Catholic theologian has warned that the European Union's failure to acknowledge religious traditions is increasing fears among East Europeans that their identities and cultures will be destroyed by integration.
The theologian said that the same "lack of recognition" was subjecting EU institutions to a "crisis of legitimacy" in Western Europe, with large minorities questioning the absence of "common ideas and values".

"The Europe of the Maastricht treaties is developing in a procedural direction, without any deeper sense of shared legal and axiomatic norms," said Aniela Dylus, vicepresident of the European Association of Catholic Theologians. "The feeling is growing that the constitution underlying Europe's future integration must also be steeped in values."

The 40-year old theologian, who directs the Economic Ethics Department at Warsaw's Catholic Theology Academy, was speaking after a symposium of 150 Polish and German politicians and church leaders, cosponsored by the academy and by the Konrad Adenauer Foundation.

The Warsaw meeting, on "ChurchState relations in the future Europe", was the eighth since 1991 to explore aspects of Europe's new economic and social order. Among other addresses at the symposium, the head of Poland's Roman Catholic Bishops Conference, Tadeusz Pieronek, said that the Vatican, which has been a permanent observer at the Council of Europe since 1970, had shifted its stance on European integration under Pope John Paul II to a greater emphasis of the need for a continentwide "new evangelisation" and "return to roots".

(Reproduced from Ecumenical News International - ENI)

Swiss churches and environmentalists issue climate warning

For the first time in their history, Swiss churches, including the Roman Catholic Church and Switzerland's main Protestant churches, have joined forces with environmental groups to launch a petition calling on the Swiss government to take urgent action to combat global warming.

The petition, which opened for signatures on 1st June, calls on the Swiss government to keep to a commitment made at the 1992 Climate Summit in Rio de Janeiro that by the year 2000 carbon dioxide emissions will be reduced to the level of 1990.

The Swiss petition is supported by 41 churches, church organisations and environmental organisations, including the Swiss Protestant Church Federation and the Swiss (Roman Catholic) Bishops' Conference. Environmental organisations supporting the petition include Greenpeace Switzerland.

Carbon dioxide emissions are a major cause of climate change and global warming. These are expected to cause highly dangerous rises in sea levels.

Lukas Vischer, a Swiss Protestant theologian and one of the organisers of the petition, said: "The consequences of climate change will affect us all.

But other people will be the first victims. Climate change is now a matter of life and death for the islands of the Pacific and the Caribbean, as well as for low lying regions in many parts of the world."

The organisers hope to have 250,000 signatures by 25 January 1997, when the petition will be presented to the Swiss government, according to the newspaper *Reformiertes Forum*.

Two years ago Switzerland ratified the Climate Change Convention which commits industrialised countries to reduce their carbon dioxide emissions to 1990 levels by the year 2000. But practically no action had been undertaken by the Swiss authorities since, the petition organisers said at a press conference this week.
The initiative follows action earlier this year by the World Council of Churches which called on its 330 member churches to take part in an international petition campaign to put pressure on governments in industrialised countries to halt global warming.

Roland Trauffer, secretary of the Swiss Bishops' Conference, said that the Roman Catholic Church supported the petition, even though the church was not a member of the World Council of Churches. Everything which affected the integrity of life and of creation was of central significance for the Roman Catholic Church, he said.

(Reproduced from Ecumenical News International - ENI)

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E d i t o r i a l

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justice, peace and creation news

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THE CHALLENGE WE FACE

by Konrad Raiser

It is very timely that ECHOES should bring together a number of articles on the global economy. It is a subject which touches everyone of us. No matter which country, no matter how remote, we are each affected by economic decisions made, most often, in the skyscraper cities of the West or Asia.

One of the most damaging aspects of recent developments, is the fast-growing numbers of the unemployed. Unemployment is one of the gravest and most destructive economic and social problems facing people all over the world. It involves terrible psychological, social and physical losses. It damages the human spirit and leads to economic devastation.

Those who are unemployed often experience rejection, isolation and loneliness. In its broader social consequences - including family breakdown, increase in crime, mounting racism and xenophobia, and a loss of social cohesion – unemployment damages society as well. Yet the education systems in most countries continue to assume everyone will find a job – few are trained or prepared for a long period of joblessness.

The growing inequality we witness in Europe today, the region of the world I know best, is closely linked to the rise in unemployment. We are facing the danger that a permanent underclass will emerge – as in the United States – which consists of long-term unemployed people who receive declining social benefits. While in the 1980's we spoke of 'new poverty', we now hear more and more talk about 'exclusion' – of the unemployed, immigrants, differently abled people, youth, female-headed households and senior citizens. In recent years, it has become clear that there is a tension between the reality of the market economy and the ideals of the welfare state which aims at inclusion but is at present under great pressure. To address this tension, the idea of the social market economy was developed. Today, the issues of unemployment and exclusion present one of the greatest challenges to this concept of the social market economy.

Churches all over Europe recognize the seriousness of the issue of high unemployment. In some places they have set up centres where unemployed people can meet, in other places they have been instrumental in developing local self-help and job-creation schemes. At national levels some churches have issued studies and are engaged in discussion with governments, employers, trade unions and civic organizations. In all cases the objective is to replace exclusion by inclusion.

The economic and social situation in Europe is characterized by a number of striking paradoxes. A first paradox is that there is high unemployment while many tasks remain undone, e.g. in the field of care for people in need, and for the environment. A second paradox is that, in Western Europe, the welfare state is under great pressure whereas countries in that part of Europe have never been so rich before. Related is a third paradox: while we have experienced decades of sustained economic growth, employment has not risen proportionately. Economic growth is becoming jobless growth. This sheds doubt on the validity of the recipe - heard during many election campaigns – that economic growth should be pursued in order to solve the problem of unemployment. Apparently, economic growth by itself is not a panacea for all the social ills we are facing in Europe today. Some forms of economic growth may even be undesirable in view of the ecological consequences.

If conventional solutions no longer respond to today's problems, in which direction shall we look for possible solutions? Several suggestions have been put forward such as flexible working times, part-time work, job-sharing schemes, reduction of working hours, and the promoting of small business enterprises. All these proposals merit serious consideration. However, the phenomenon of high, long-term and structural unemployment also invites us to rethink the very understanding of work itself. Some of the most important forms of human labour are neither paid, nor recognized nor counted. Much of this work is performed by those who are not gainfully employed or only partially. Paid and unpaid work should be shared in a more equitable way. Paid work is more likely to be distributed fairly if we all try to achieve a better balance between paid and unpaid work on the one hand, and our need for leisure and re-creation on the other hand. In addition, the relationship between labour and income deserves further consideration.

It is clear that the issue is not that there is not enough work to do. The fundamental

continue on page 4 - column 1

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challenge is that we need a different set of priorities for the organization of economic life. The basic test for all economic policies should be whether or not they enhance the quality of life. The paradigm that remunerated work as the most important basis for participation and integration in society has become questionable. Promoting citizenship, expressed in all domains of society, may be a more effective way to affirm human dignity, enhance the quality of life, and improve possibility for inclusion in community life. Within this broader context, it should be recognized that the purpose of work is to build inclusive communities in which the different gifts of everybody are contributed and recognized.

The articles in this issue attempt to provide an analysis and include some proposals for solutions, not just for the unemployed but for all who become the victim of inhumane policies and processes. Of course they are by no means the last word on the issues at stake but hopefully they stimulate further ecumenical reflection and action and help us work towards establishing economies of life.

The Rev Dr Konrad Raiser is General Secretary of the World Council of Churches.

On theology and economy

by José Bittencourt Jnr.

During the last three decades, the Latin American continent was recognized both as a kind of ecclesiological laboratory and as one for the production of theological-pastoral knowledge. This reputation was due mainly to the prophetic practice of some groups within different confessions, committed to the liberation of the poor.

The fundamental motives of the aforementioned prophetic practice were: the so-called option for the poor, political-economic liberation as a goal (historical utopia); and the kingdom of God as a paradigm (eschatological utopia). The theological discourse corresponding to these motives was called Theology of Liberation. It should be underlined that the elaboration of this discourse represented a methodological about-face unprecedented in the history of Latin American Christianity.

From politics to economics

The first generation of theologians who produced knowledge in tune with the historical specificities of Latin America gave serious attention to the economic aspects of life in the continent. However, the National Security regimes, followed by a gradual process of restoration of democracy, together with the emergence of social movements and of what was then called the Popular Church, obliged that school of theological thinking to give priority attention to the political dimension of reality.

As of the second half of the 1980s, there was an intensification of extraordinary structural changes. International capital used neo-liberalism as the vehicle for remodelling itself. At the same time, real socialism was defeated, as symbolized by the fall of the Berlin wall, and the ignominious Cold War drew to a close as a result. The repercussions of these changes were immediately felt in Latin America. Indicators of this were, amongst others, the electoral victories of neo-liberal presidential candidates; the defeat of the Sandinistas; and the Cuban crisis. Obviously, the praxis of liberation could not remain unaffected in the face of such sweeping changes. As a result, theological thinking and discourse could not fail to be affected.

These changes combined to give rise to a new international order. This new order was imposed on the basis of free-market capitalism, unencumbered by the ideological bipolarity that had previously held sway.

From the viewpoint of the poorest countries and regions of the planet, the most pernicious effect of that new order was systematic exclusion. Today, beyond exploitation and marginalization, there is an ongoing process of exclusion of monumental proportions and unpredictable consequences. In addition to the economic aspects, unusual and subtle forms of domination are being exercised, primarily by means of the most sophisticated electronic media.

Based on the substantial changes in social dynamics being brought about by economic factors, the Theology of Liberation is rediscovering the importance of the economic dimension and is embarking on a major effort of criticism and self-criticism.

It was recognized at once that that effort would have to overcome major obstacles since, in the new structural framework, a large part of the existing theoretical arsenal seemed insufficient, even in the domain of the social sciences. This would affect one of the method-

who/ilo/d. bregnard

ological procedures of the Theology of Liberation: the use of what is known as socio-analytical mediation.

Thus, Latin American theology was challenged to come up with new paradigms that could guide the process of devising answers to the new challenges. And in the framework of this effort of criticism, self-criticism and reformulation, and in the context of the need to interpret the major cyclical phenomena, Latin American theologians formulated a Theological Critique of the Political Economy.

New order and new themes

The new international order means changes in the domains of economics, culture, learning and geopolitics. Furthermore, a new set of trans-border problems emerged, namely, environment, migration, affirmation of ethnic and religious identities, exploitation of natural resources and so on.

This new reality embodies sharp contradictions. The growth of mega-projects is being matched by a disquieting upsurge of ethnic confrontation. In the religious field, the ecumenical dialogue was being replaced by neo-confessionalism and by proselytizing fundamentalism. These are two opposing forces: the mega forces versus conflicts revolving around the particular/regional/national/local.

Therefore, it is not just a matter of calling for mutual assistance. The situation calls for a new conception of the notion of human dignity, which is being radically denied.

Economic innovations are dictated by an unclear political strategy. In the South-South and South-East axes, the State is being increasingly sidelined. In the North-North axis, what is mooted is not a weakening of the State but a pragmatic reallocation of power, on a case-by-case basis. This means restricting decision-making power to a very small group of persons and bodies supposedly capable of dealing with the linkages between technology, production, reproduction and distribution of goods and wealth.

Challenges to Pastoral Work

For the all the foregoing reasons, it may be stated that the practice of Christian liberation in Latin America is nowadays facing a challenge even greater than that posed by the National Security regimes. Even more serious is the existence of a totalitarian ideology seeking to demonstrate the lack of any kind of alternative. At the core of this ideology is the perverse notion of the poor masses as an obstacle to

economic growth, that is, to the expansion of the total market. According to that economic logic, the impoverished masses are claiming fundamental rights without a matching counterpart in the form of production. It would therefore be better if they simply did not exist.

This late capitalism brought an additional complication with it for the poor countries in the southern hemisphere, traditionally reduced to the status of suppliers of raw materials and of cheap labour. Once allies, dependent on big capital, they are now being confirmed in their peripheral condition. As a result of the evolution of technology, financed by the Third World itself through its systematic exploitation and external indebtedness, this group of countries no longer constitutes a vital piece in the overall scheme of things.

What is taking shape is the deliberate exclusion of peoples, groups, countries and regions of the world.

As a source of raw materials and cheap labour, it lost its bargaining power owing to the substitution of materials and the application of technology to production. Even tighter control is being exercised over strategic energy sources by the powerful countries, as was amply demonstrated by the Gulf War.

It should be pointed out that exclusion is now a worldwide phenomenon; it suffices to mention the pockets of poverty and structural unemployment in the rich countries. Some people still insist on using the socio-economic classification encapsulated in the term "marginalization". This term was used to designate those social sectors that formed the last link in the chain of exploitation, as well as minorities rejected because of deviant behaviour. In the meantime, the present situation seems to comprise an even more gloomy reality.

What we are seeing is something larger than discrimination against extremely poor or delinquent population groups. What is taking shape is the deliberate exclusion of peoples, groups, countries and regions of the world. At the macro level, this situation makes it imperative to take a fresh look at issues such as the quality of material and spiritual life of poor people; relations with countries in the northern hemisphere and South-South relations.

Together with social and popular movements, Latin American Christians struggled for decades against economic exploitation. At present, in the new capitalist logic, those population groups that cannot be exploited for production are permanently discarded. A Copernican revolution is under way! We are arriving at a stage where being exploited is a "luxury", as it means not being excluded. Clearly, this change is profoundly affecting all the strategies of trade unions, popular movements and indeed the social ministries or other means of Christian solidarity and service.

What is most serious is that the system is having the effect of making the poor feel guilty about their condition and they are introjecting an image of themselves as subhuman creatures. The system seeks to eliminate the very sense of human dignity among the excluded, to the point of making them see themselves as superfluous. A psychological war is being waged. The battlefield par excellence is therefore that of the ideological struggle, which is waged above all at the level of symbolism.

Therefore, it is not just a matter of calling for mutual assistance. The situation calls for a new conception of the notion of human dignity, which is being radically denied. Resistance at the symbolic level to ideologies that justify domination and exclusion must be unwavering. The language of publicity has finally pervaded all discourses without exception the political, scientific and the religious. The first step in this battle is to unmask and reveal the (idolatrous) religious values camouflaged in economic discourse.

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The call to Jubilee

by Ann Pettifor

peter williams/wcc

"Then shalt thou cause the trumpet of the jubilee to sound... .and ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof; it shall be a jubilee unto you; and ye shall return every one unto their possession, and ye shall return every one unto their family."

Leviticus 25,9-10

The call to jubilee in the year 2000 is a call to lift the yoke of economic degradation from those enslaved by economic forces -in particular by international debt.

Debt was for Israelites of the Old Testament, as for the poor of Africa today, the most potent form of slavery. The Lord's speech quoted in Leviticus uses imagery derived from the experience of a slave community, degraded by debt. Deprived of wealth; alienated from the land, from their own labour and from each other, the call is for the return *"of every one unto their possession... and unto their family"*. Such law is based in the experience of redemption. And redemption is specifically an economic term: it happens when a person or community is delivered from the rule of the moneylender or market. The corresponding political image is liberation.[1]

As we approach the millennium, people around the world are calling for a new redemption; the de-

Go down Moses
way down in
Egypt land.
Tell old pharaoh
Let my people go.
O let us all from
bondage flee
And let us all in
Christ be free.
We need not always
weep and mourn
And wear these
slavery chains forlorn

African-American Spiritual

livery of poor nations from the rule of creditors. The call is for the remission of debts that hang like millstones on the necks of these countries.

In Britain a campaign has been launched – Jubilee 2000 – whose thesis is a simple one; the backlog of unpayable debt of governments of poorer countries can never be removed, except by an agreed remission on the part of the creditors. For the sake of ending the slavery of debt, and for creating a new and disciplined beginning in financial relations between rich and poor countries, remission of these debts should be achieved by the year of redemption – Jubilee. The year 2000.

Drawing the line

There is a great deal of confusion and mythology about debt. When we think about debt we tend to think in personal terms and of our own debt. But there is a striking and important difference between personal debt and international debt.

The main difference is this: in the case of personal debt it is possible to draw a line under indebtedness and bring it to an end. That line is called bankruptcy. It is a line – or an abyss – beyond which we do not expect individuals or businesses to descend. (The Old Testament exhorts lenders not to destroy the lives of debtors by taking their livelihood away. *"No one shall take a mill or an upper millstone in pledge, for they would be taking a life in pledge." Deuteronomy 24,6)*

Bankruptcy is a line recognised in domestic law. No such line can be drawn in international law.

Governments cannot, it is asserted, become bankrupt. In fact they do and many indebted countries have ceased to function as sovereign states. Some, like Zaire, Sierra Leone and Liberia, have reverted to subsistence economies, and are plagued by disease and civil war.

An unpayable burden

According to the World Bank, the debts owed by developing countries to their richer creditors in the North increased by 8% in 1995 and now stands at over £2 trillion. For many of the poorest countries this represents an unpayable burden. The banks' latest analysis reveals that for developing countries as a group, actual debt service payments over the last year, were roughly half of those scheduled. In other words, almost half of the debts are not being repaid.

Debt and 18th century slavery

There are striking parallels between the 20th century millstone of debt that hangs on the shoulders of the poor countries of the world – and the practise of slavery in the 18th and 19th centuries. One of the most important is the way in which the trade in debt is the most accepted by public opinion as an unpleasant, but necessary by-product of an economic system from which the North benefits. In just the same way, the 18th century trade in slaves was tolerated. Evangelical Christians were deeply embarrassed by the Anglican Society for the Propagation of the Gospel's ownership of slaves. Their task was difficult: to challenge the dominant ethic which led to the Church's tolerance of slavery as a necessary evil.

There are other parallels. In the late eighteenth century slave-owners strengthened their hold over plantation slaves, and co-ordinated their efforts to defend the trade, through the Society of West Indian Planters and merchants. Today rich creditors negotiate with poor countries in several powerful forums: the **International Monetary Fund**, the **Paris Club of OECD Creditors**, and the **London Club of Banks**. *IMF intervention in, and control over, the economies of the debtor nation is a prerequisite for all debt reduction or re-scheduling agreements negotiated through the Paris and London Clubs.*

Today campaigners are challenging the new dominant ethic: acceptance of a trade in debt which removes choice from developing nations and denies people in these countries control over their own destinies.

Furthermore the Club of OECD Creditors has this in common with the alliance of the slave-holding nations of the eighteenth century. It is an overwhelmingly White, European-led Club, whose actions and decisions result in an equivalent form of oppression of predominantly Black nations.

Economic enslavement

Perhaps the most powerful analogy between human bondage and the economic slavery of today's global capital markets is the pattern of forced unpaid labour – carried out at the national level.

Because of pressure to repay debts, and because of the nature of the international trading system, poor countries today produce more than they have before, but receive less additional income. They are forced to do so by a global financial system, led by the IMF and World Bank, which puts pressure on them to service their debts, but which ignores the problems of international commodity markets. Indeed the global financial system promotes policies whose very purpose is to induce falls in prices paid by the rich nations for essential commodities from poor countries.

According to research taken by the Debt Crisis Network[2], African nations achieved a 50% increase in the volume of exports after 1985. But their efforts to increase revenues from exports was frustrated by falling prices. If Africa's export prices had kept pace with the rise in import prices (from richer countries) from 1980, by 1992 the region could have paid for all of its imports from its export earnings as well as part of its interest payments without any foreign aid or loans. *Africa's cumulative loss of purchasing power of exports due to prices changes, amounted to $70-$75 billion between 1980 and 1992.*

Producing more, but receiving less in payment, amounts to nothing less than forced unpaid labour at the national level – directly analogous to slavery. When this is combine with pressure to repay debts whose cost rises inexorably, the effect is often devastating.

Since 1984, governments of the poorest countries in Africa have transferred $150 billion to rich creditors in the North. This is more than 1.5 times the amount that they owed in 1980. International debts rise because international interest rates are variable, and rose inexorably over the 1980's, for reasons that had little to do with the economies of poor countries. Debts rise also because of changes to currencies, changes manipulated by rich countries. According to the World Bank, depreciation of the US dollar increased the dollar value of debt denominated in other currencies by $13 billion in 1995. Countries whose trade is in dollars, but whose debt is in Yen or Deutschmarks suffered a noticeable increase in debt – again through developments that had nothing to do with the original loans.

Because debt repayment, under pressure from the IMF, assumes a high priority in the economic goals of poor countries, governments are forced to divert resources from health, sanitation and water provision – into debt servicing. Uganda is at the centre of the Aids pandemic. Its government spends only $3 per person on health, but $30 per person on debt repayments to creditors like the IMF and World Bank[3].

As a result debt, like slavery in the eighteenth century, works like a cancer on the economies of poor countries. The call to Jubilee is a call for the abolition of this slavery. For redemption from market forces. For liberation from economic degradation.

As with the campaign to abolish slavery, so the campaign for remission of the unpayable debts of the poorest countries – Jubilee 2000 – will be fought across several continents – with sub-Saharan Africa once again at its focus. As with the campaign to abolish slavery, so a successful conclusion will require a massive shift in popular consensus. Concessions will be required from the international financial institutions; governments will have to intervene and there will need to be compromise from the commercial sector.

If the cancer of slavery could be removed from the global economic order by citizens around the world determined to achieve justice, then it should be possible in the late 20th century for citizens to remove the cancer of debt too. To sound the trumpet of Jubilee and proclaim liberty throughout the land.

Notes:

1 I am grateful to John Davies, former bishop of Shrewsbury for these insights, and in particular to his book "The world on loan", published by the Bible Society in 1993.

2 page 2 of "A fresh start for Africa" by Ann Pettifor and Angela Wood, published by the Debt Crisis Network, february 1996.

3 taken from "A fresh start for Africa".

Building strategies on the international financial institutions

by Marcos Aruda

The intent of this article is to share reflections about NGO strategies and tactics based on what I have learned from those organizations and networks, and from my relatively short, but quite intensive, experience of work with NGOs on International Financial Institutions (IFIs), in particular the World Bank, as coordinator of the NGO Working Group on the World Bank and liaison officer of the NGO-World Bank Committee.

NGO and social movement strategies with regard to the International Financial Institutions (IFIs), vary according to their respective strategic goals. These goals vary widely. The concepts of what the problems are and what interests are involved also vary. For some, the IFIs are the enemy, or at least a part of the enemy. For others, they are an actual or a potential ally. For others still, they are real, powerful, global economic agents within a system that needs to be transformed. The strategy to transform that system includes dialogue, interaction and, at the same time, confrontation with the power agents, according to the effective force accumulated by those who strive for transformation. This diversity of approaches among NGOs and social movements makes the challenge of discussing strategy vis-à-vis IFIs both difficult and complex. It is unavoidable that this paper will make a number of generalizations.

peter williams/wcc

Problems

Developing countries and the poor suffer much more from what they lose from being unequal partners in the global economy than from the lack of financial resources. Increased assistance will continue to be ineffective unless the rich OECD countries and the Bretton Woods institutions (the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank) act upon the factors of structural drainage of capital and resources from the South. NGOs should articulate their action plans in such a way that, side by side with the issues raised by multinational development loans, they include the most important factors of impoverishment and maldevelopment, in the agenda of interaction with the IFIs.

The IFIs are more than multilateral aid agencies: they act increasingly as global planners and global managers. The amount being transferred annually by IFIs to the South is insignificant when it is compared with the private transfers through financial loans, credit lines and foreign direct investment. The IFIs have a power of influence over the borrowing developing countries that is disproportional to the amounts they lend to them.

There is a broad consensus among NGOs that the IFIs, far from fulfilling their mandate not to intervene in the politics of their member-countries, have become tutors of the borrower governments. This is especially so since the early 80s when the debt crisis unfolded. The IFIs directly and indirectly influenced the internal policies of developing countries. And, such influence generally coincided with the interests of the governments and economies of the industrialized countries (their main stockholders) and of transnational groups which originate in those countries.

IFIs have always resisted to discuss macroeconomic policy with social organizations. The most persistent seems to be the IMF, but the hurdle exists at the level of the management and directorship of all IFIs. There is an entrenched conviction that they know everything about "how to make the economy work" anywhere in the world.

NGO's should be able to tackle the contradictions of IFIs and adapt their strategies to the ambiguities that have become part of their nature. They should press persistently for the introduction of participation of the impoverished sectors in the social economy of their communities and their countries as a precondition for development to be just, effective and sustainable.

Reform or abolish?

Should we be fighting for deep reforms of these institutions, or rather for their definitive closure? Different NGOs and social movements have taken one or the other position. For a growing number of social movements and NGOs, no path will be strategically effective unless it is envisaged in the broader context of the struggle for a deep structural, institutional and relational reorganization of the global economic and financial system itself, and the establishment of people-and community-centred forms of development, for the bottom upwards, and from the local toward the global spheres.

Action strategies

There are several examples of successful public campaigns of NGOs concerning IFI-funded projects. Here we can mention the pressure for cancellation of Bank funding to big dam projects in India and Nepal, and pressure for popular participation in Brazils PLANAFLORO Project. These examples provide lessons with respect to present and future strategies regarding IFIs.

Even the more open people in the IFI staff have difficulty discussing the assumptions behind their policy guidelines. One word that generates impatient reaction, if not aggressiveness, among IFI staff is "paradigm". They generally do not accept that the main terms of reference of their economic thinking are questionable, that the neoclassic academic dogmas in which they were trained to believe hinder, rather than help them from identifying the real problems and getting to the real solutions. Yet, this is a crucial area of debate for NGOs and social movements. The market-centred paradigm cannot be made compatible with people-centred development. Yet, the World Bank manages to preach the latter while practising the former. This is one reason why it is so widely criticized as inconsistent in its practice.

Overall, if we want to get the discussion of concepts and assumptions, the most effective approach is inductive. Start from facts and field evidence related to problems, mistakes and failures, then move forward to seeking the determining factors. Insist on unveiling the contradiction between the IFI rhetoric and practice. Do not accept to halt discussions at the level of where the factors are visible. They are there because other, often invisible, factors exist as a precondition to them. This is usually the way reality is perceived, problems are identified and challenges understood. Also do not accept "empirical evidence" based on economic indicators only, in isolation from indicators related to human – social, political and cultural – and environmental costs of policies, programmes, and projects.

Strategically, pressure for measures to reduce and cancel commercial, bilateral and multicultural debt should be continued

Particularly effective has been the action of Washington-based NGOs on the government of the USA, concerning its policies towards, and financing of IFIs. Other NGOs, such as the Swiss Coalition in Switzerland, and Christian Aid in the UK, have established an effective interaction with the IFIs' Executive Directors from their respective countries, thus exerting considerable influence both on the country's approach to the IFIs and on concrete policy issues standing for decision in its Governing Board.

IFIs have come to the point of seeking forms to direct financing to NGOs. This has raised intricate problems related to whether the funds should be passed on directly to the NGOs or whether they should be channeled through the national government. Another issue is whether transfers should take the form of grants or loans. NGO autonomy, on the one hand, and IFI conditionality, on the other, seem to be the main issues at stake.

NGOs should be aware that IFI funds for specific projects or programmes involve much less risk of being co-opted than any type of core funding that ties the NGO. It is crucial to articulate action on IFIs with action aimed at the creation of new global, democratical structures and organizations, empowered to tax transnational corporations, commercial banks and foreign exchange transactions, to introduce ethical principles to global business. Such action should also aim at the establishment of an Economic and Environmental Security council in the context of a democratically reformed United Nations.

Favourable international economic conditions for Structural Adjustment Programmes to work and benefit the poor do not exist and must be created. The debts of developing countries, unfair trading conditions, distortions and inequities in international flows, remain outstanding obstacles to progress. The Banks initiative of a Multilateral Debt Facility should be strongly supported. Pressure on government officials should stress that the MDF does not imply full cancellation, reduction or write-off multilateral debt, but rather a type of rescheduling which will effectively decrease the stock of multilateral debt of some of the poorest developing countries.

Strategically, pressure for measures to reduce and cancel commercial, bilateral and multicultural debt should be continued.

Notes:

1 The original from which this article was extracted carries the same title and is available from WCC-Unit III. It was written with the support of Canadian MDB Coalition as a contribution to the NGO strategy meetings held in Washington DC, October 1995.

Marcos Arruda is an economist and educator, coordinator of PACS - Institute of Alternative Policies for the Southern Cone of Latin America (Rio de Janeiro), Chair of the ICVA Commission on Sustainable Development (Geneva) and fellow of the Transnational Institute (Amsterdam).

The social market economy needs international social clauses

by Rev. Dr. Christoph Stückelberger

shishir k. roy/casa

World trade can be a positive or a negative factor for human development. It depends on how much it includes ecological and social concerns. Social clauses can – if they are not abused for protectionist aims – strengthen human rights in economic activities.

Strong support from the South

Social clauses are often seen as a protectionist measure of the "North". Swiss aid agencies – including Bread for All – as well as trade unions, organisations and partner institutions asked their partners in the South for their opinion on the issue. The outcome of this inquiry is surprising as it shows that 91 % of the 82 replies received from 67 countries in the South and in Eastern Europe are clearly in favour of social clauses! 83.5% consider it a means which could increase respect for workers' rights. They also answered that social clauses should not be included in the GATT agreement alone (0%) nor with the International Labour Organisation(ILO) mechanisms alone (25%), but with a joint mechanism ILO/World Trade Organisation(WTO) (49%).

Ethical reasons for social clauses

1) A human development: Goal of the economy

What is actually the goal of economic activities? This is a question that has to be persistently asked. Increase of capital, economic growth or the victory over competitors are not an end in itself, at most means to achieve the goal. All human beings as well as all living beings have basic needs to live, to grow and to develop. The goal of economy is to serve life, which means to enable a decent development all over the world.

2) Human rights are the basis of human development

Both the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the UN-Agreements on Political, Economic, Social and Cultural Rights as well as the Right to Development form the extensively acknowledged yardstick to judge whether development follows human principles. Economic development and world trade as its major players have to be measured according to this yardstick.

3) Freedom and justice imply each other

By means of liberalizing world trade, the world economy should

be able to increase its dynamics. Thus, the value of freedom resumes first place in the economic value order. Freedom is an important basic value. However, each value is going to be perverted and turns into a non-value if absolutized. Absolutized freedom leads to boundlessness and to the death of the weak; on the other hand: absolutized justice leads to egalitarianism and to a totalitarian state. Basic values remain human only as long as they keep in balance with other basic values. Freedom enables a human development if connected to justice, justice enables a human development if it allows freedom. Therefore, the liberal world trade needs to be completed with just social minimum standards.

4) There will still be differences, but they have to be reduced

Economically speaking, world trade lives off the differences of production costs between the various locations (wages, social standards, etc.). Yet, world trade has at the same time to work towards the dismantling of these differences, if it wants to take seriously the abovementioned criteria of a human development. But what are legitimate competitive advantages and what are exploiting working conditions? Advantages of location through natural or human resources are legitimate and should be used by developing countries. But social dumping through abusive child labour, wages below the subsistence level, obstruction of free trade union activities, etc. must be prevented. Social clauses are merely human rights minimum standards which still leave room for big differences and which are far away from the ethical optimum.

5) Social development also serves economic development

It is widely held that an economic recovery is the precondition for social development and the financing of a welfare state. (With this argument, even trade relations to dictatorships are downright justified!) However, the reverse is just as true: Social development is a precondition for a permanent economic development and increases productivity and efficiency; higher wages boost the purchasing power, better education strengthens competitiveness, a partnership between employers and employees strengthens the social and political stability, the just distribution of land among many people increases productivity. All this is confirmed by different investigations.

peter williams/wcc

Multilateral, bilateral, private social clauses

To implement social clauses, several levels of activities are required. Ethically it is shocking and economically unjustified that commercial sanctions are permitted, when export countries artificially reduce the price of their goods via subsidies; and that it is not the case whenever this competitive edge has been secured by gross violations against basic labour rights as human rights and thus by social dumping. Hence, trade sanctions against the violation of social clauses are not simply to be rejected. We rather need a joint control mechanism by eg. WTO and ILO with a transparent procedure - also as a defense against protectionist abuse! This has already been proposed, for example, by the International Covenant of Free Trade Unions. In the case of those efforts of the European Union(EU) which put positive measures in the sense of conditionality instead of sanctions in the forefront, customs preferences for exports are granted to those developing countries that respect the social clauses.

Apart from this level of international mechanisms, mechanisms of bilateral trade agreements have to be checked. Additionally, voluntary agreements between enterprises and NGOs (aid agencies, fair-trade-organizations, consumer organizations) are important for the consciousness-raising close to the grassroots and to the consumers – not as a replacement, but as a completion. These can be faster implemented than state agreements. The fast advance of fair trade and the social clause Migros-Del Monte, Philippines, initiated in Switzerland by Bread for All and recently monitored by Philippine experts, are examples for this.

Notes:

"Repères" 1/96: Clause sociale by Michel Egger and Catherine Schümperli, 50 pages, available at: Bread for All, POBox, CH-3000 Berne 7; article "Social clauses in trade? Views from the South" by Michel Egger and Catherine Schümperli in the magazine "Swiss Coalition News", March 1996; Ch. Stückelberger: "Sozialklauseln im internationalen Handel. Sozialethische Kriterien", Institut für Sozialethik, Berne 1995, 18 pages.

The Rev Dr Christoph Stückelburger is the General Secretary of Bread for All and a university lecturer at the University of Basle/Switzerland.

Social clause as an ideology

by J. John

Addressing a meeting on the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), Renato Ruggiero, World Trade Organisation (WTO) Director General, exhorted Indian industry not to make a drama out of the so-called social clause. Earlier, he said that it was only a debate about a debate. Such a noncommittal attitude of the Director General of WTO raises the legitimate question of the nature of the global debate on the social clause.

But first it is important to define the term social clause as it is being used in this article. Primarily, the social clause establishes a tie between labour standards and international trade. The tie is established by inserting a clause in the instruments of the World Trade Organisation or any other multilateral trade institution. It gives legitimacy to a country to ban import of goods produced in another country violating predefined international labour standards. It is the enforcement of labour standards by linking it with trade, especially, through the instrumentality of WTO or other multilateral trade institutions, that gives the social clause its specificity. The social clause also implies that in situations of dispute, WTO will be the arbitrator, and the respective nation states, enforcing agencies, of labour standards. Therefore the social clause cannot be equated with labour rights, their protection, or a social policy delinked from the instruments of international trade, WTO and nation states. There is a deliberate attempt to swap terminologies so that the distinction between genuine concern for labour rights and the use of labour rights a trade barrier is blurred.

Is the insertion of the social clause in WTO genuinely intended to monitor the rights of workers all over the world? Is it in the interest of the transnational corporations, who remain competitive on the differentiated and segmented labour markets, not to insert any clause that harm their interests? In this sense is the debate serving an ideological function?

Ashim Roy an Indian Trade Union activist argues (Labour File, November 1995, New Delhi) that the debate is indeed serving an ideological function. On a hypothetical question, the debate is intended to divide the workers, and eventually transnational corporations to maintain the advantages of segmented labour markets.

Let us examine two unintended consequences of the social clause debate. One, at a critical moment when global capitalism spreads its net everywhere, labour organisations stand divided-along the North and the South, among southern countries, and even within specific countries, on an instrumentality over which labour organisations do not have any control. Second, ironically, the debate has helped in creating an apparent identity in positions between labour/non governmental organisations and their respective governments. For example, Indian labour organisation's rejection of the social clause proposal was apparently similar to that of the Indian government. Such identity of positions could also be drawn between labour organisation/NGOs and respective governments in the northern countries.

Nevertheless articulations based on genuine concerns on the rights of labour in a highly competitive

and ruthless global economy should be seen as distinct from the ideological articulations of the social clause.

A highly participatory process in India tried to address this dilemma – the need for protecting the rights of labour, and its negation in the instrumentality of WTO. Two national consultations were held. Major trade union centres, organisations of workers in the unorganised/informal sectors, child labour campaign groups, environmental groups and human rights groups participated at these consultations. The first, held in New Delhi in March 1995, provided an open forum for all the varied participant organisations to openly argue out their perspectives. The New Delhi consultation set up three working groups – on labour standards, environmental standards and human rights. The reports offered an analysis of costs and benefits of labour standards – WTO linkage, and suggested some alternatives. These reports were further scrutinised and approved in the second national consultation held in Bangalore in October 1995.

The Bangalore Consultation came up with, among other things, three innovative proposals on the issue. They were, one, to draft a UN Labour Rights Convention, two, to campaign for an (Indian) National Labour Rights Commission and three, to work towards a South Asian Labour Alliance.

The resolutions were made based on three undergirding principles. First the emphasis shifted from labour standards to labour rights. Second there had been a shift from a total rejection to the search for an alternative mechanism to enforce labour rights at the international level. Third, the group distinguished its position vis-à-vis that of the government and suggested ways to enforce labour rights at the national level.

Universal Labour Rights

A negation of WTO-linked labour standards need not be construed as a negation of the principle of Universal Labour Rights. The distinction made between labour standards and labour rights should be seen in this context. Labour standards implies externally determined yardsticks that others have to follow. The emphasis is more on the onus of the employers and the states to follow certain prescriptions of standards. On the contrary, the concept of labour rights emphasises the worker, the specificity of the nation and the responsibility of the employers and the state to respect these rights.

Increasing integration of national economies into a global system, liberalisation of global trade by institutional arrangements to remove trade barriers, and the drastic changes occurring in the international industrial system leading to the emergence of a division of labour quite different from what existed earlier, remind us of the need for protecting labour rights. None of these changes are automatically ensuring a better living and working condition for millions of workers all over the world. On the contrary, violations of rights of labour are increasing in all spheres. Liberalisation has accentuated competition and the urge for making profit.

Employers, nation states, global corporations and international, financial and trade institutions are all parties to the systematic violation of human rights of working populations. The tragedy of the social clause debate, initiated at the WTO level, is that these multiplicities of actors and locales of labour rights violations have been camouflaged. On the other hand, the issue has been narrowed down to violations of rights at plant level, mainly in the developing countries. Articulation of the issue as "protection of jobs in the North", and "comparative advantage developing countries have due to low labour standards" have further vitiated the atmosphere. It has also aggravated the division among workers in the North and the South.

There was no dispute in accepting certain set of rights as universally accruing to workers in all countries, irrespective of the stages of their development. It was also accepted that elaboration of such rights could be found in the UN Declaration of Human Rights, International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and especially, in ILO Conventions that deals with freedom of association (Convention 87), the right to collective bargaining (Convention 98), equal pay for equal work for men and women (Convention 100) and ban on child labour or that defines minimum age of education into employment (Convention 138) and conventions concerning forced and compulsory labour (Convention 29 & 105).

Alternative to Social Clause in WTO

Rejection of WTO linked monitoring of labour rights has been unambiguous. Such overwhelming rejection of a Social Clause in WTO, as the method to enforce labour rights, is prompted mainly by the following reasons.

a) The global economy is highly iniquitous. About 80% of world GNP is concentrated in the industrialised countries. The poorest 20% of the world population has only a share of 1.4% of world's GNP. Structural Adjustment Programmes promoted by World Bank and IMF have resulted not only in the impoverisation of masses of people, but also in the aggravation of debt crisis and resultant net transfer of resources from the developing to the developed countries. Of equal or so important is the phenomenal growth of giant global corporations and the absolute control they wield over the global trade. The fifteen largest corporations have the gross income greater than the Gross Domestic Products of over 120 countries. The 500 largest corporations control 70% of world trade. One fifth of the world's population lives in abject poverty and about 800 million are unemployed.

GATT negotiations and the formation for World Trade Organisation were not intended to change this unequal structure of global economy. On the contrary, they have strengthened the grip, of TNCs and governments of the industrialised countries, over the

m. traitenberg/ilo

millions of poor in the world. WTO has assured a freer trade, but is the same institution that engenders systematic rights violations. It is a pity that trade unions and humanitarian groups in the North, who advocate WTO-labour standard linkage, have overlooked these fundamental contradictions.

b) A distinction should also be drawn between the interests of the state, which a government may espouse, and the interest of the exploited millions. WTO may reach a dispute settlement, in the interest of a nation and not in the interest of the workers. It is probable that workers rights may further be violated in the process. The argument is not that a trade linked monitoring is impossible, neither has it been intended to say that dispute settlement cannot take place. The argument is that such settlement need not be in the interests of the workers, particularly, of those in the poor countries, given the unequal structure of international trade.

Nonetheless, it is important to emphasize that the rejection is not based on a 'nationalistic fervour' that keeps a blind eye on global economic structure and division of labour. It is not based on the theory of 'comparative advantage accruing from cheap labour'.

A mere rejection will not take us anywhere. An alternative should evolve, that (1) considers the need for universal monitoring of labour rights in an unequal and unjust global economic structure, (2) emphasizes the accountability of Trans national Corporations and the troika of World Bank, IMF and WTO , and (3) ensures the enforcement of labour rights which is more political, participatory and democratic than the economically deterministic WTO-labours standard linkage.

In spite of ILO's more than 75 years of history in articulating labour rights, ILO was not seen as the most effective body to monitor labour rights in the liberalised trade regime under WTO. The structure of ILO does not permit effective enforceability.

Therefore the proposal for the adoption of a UN Labour Rights Convention (UNLRC). Though the details of the UNLRC have to be worked out through a process of consultations at national and international levels, the basic features of the initial proposal are as follows:

a) The Labour Rights Convention should be adopted by the UN General Assembly.
b) Transnational corporations should be brought within the ambit of the convention.
c) as with Child Rights Convention, there should be a very effective reporting mechanism on the progress each country would be making in protecting labour rights.

One significant advantage of the UNLRC is that it operates on the principles of moral and political pressure. To that extent negative trade sanctions, which may have unintended negative consequences like a spurt in unemployment and poverty can be avoided. Another advantage is that ILO, being a UN body, can be effectively roped into strengthen the monitoring system.

The proposal should also be seen in the light of deliberate attempts being made to prop up World Bank, IMF and WTO as alternative bodies to United Nations, According to the UN Charter, IMF and World Bank are nominally among the Specialised Agencies, which work with United Nations (Article 57), through the coordinating machinery of the Economic and Social Council (Article 63). But these mandates are gleefully abandoned. Those institutions have assumed virtual autonomy. It is vitally important to strengthen UN machinery as a countercheck to the unaccountable Bretton Wood institutions.

National Labour Rights Commission

The group acknowledged the urgency in evolving effective arrangements within the country, to safeguard labour rights, despite the fact that India does not have a dearth of labour legislations. Enactment of the Factories Act was in 1881, which primarily dealt with the problem of child labour, fixing the minimum age of employment of children at seven years etc. The Factories Act has been amended many times to make it comprehensive; a plethora of legislations followed, enacted by central government and by different provinces and states. Despite voluminous legislations on paper, labour rights are consistently violated in all sectors.

Employers deny with impunity the right to association and collective bargaining. Minimum wage laws are violated and child labour employed enlarge number in the production of export oriented goods and in agrarian sectors.

Violations of rights of workers have been further aggravated by governments carrying out of Structural Adjustment Programmes and policies aimed at integrating Indian economy into the global market. Government is deliberately creating conditions for export driven production, at the expense of the rights of workers. Consequently, the profile of workers is undergoing fundamental changes. The number of contract, home based an d unorganised workers are increasing at all levels of production processes. Consequently, it is easy to violate labour laws or to make the laws ineffective.

It has also to be kept in mind that international labour standards (rights) do not cover 92% of the workforce in India, who are in the unorganised and informal sectors. Moreover, only a very small percentage of the workforce is engaged in trade linked production in export orientated sectors.

The proposal to form a National Labour Rights Commission (NLRC) has to be seen in this context.

The Indian proposal has four major components. First, it rejects labour rights -WTO linkage. Second, it upholds the principles of universal labour rights and the need for evolving structures to monitor the enforcement of labour rights. Third, it proposes UN Labour Rights Commission as an alternative. Fourth, at the national level it suggests the creation of a powerful National Labour Rights Commission to monitor and enforce labour rights.

Such an approach can ward off the debilitating and divisive tendencies inherent in the ideological function of the social clause debate. Moreover, it will strengthen solidarity among workers' organisations globally, at a time when it shows signs of rupture due to internal and external factors.

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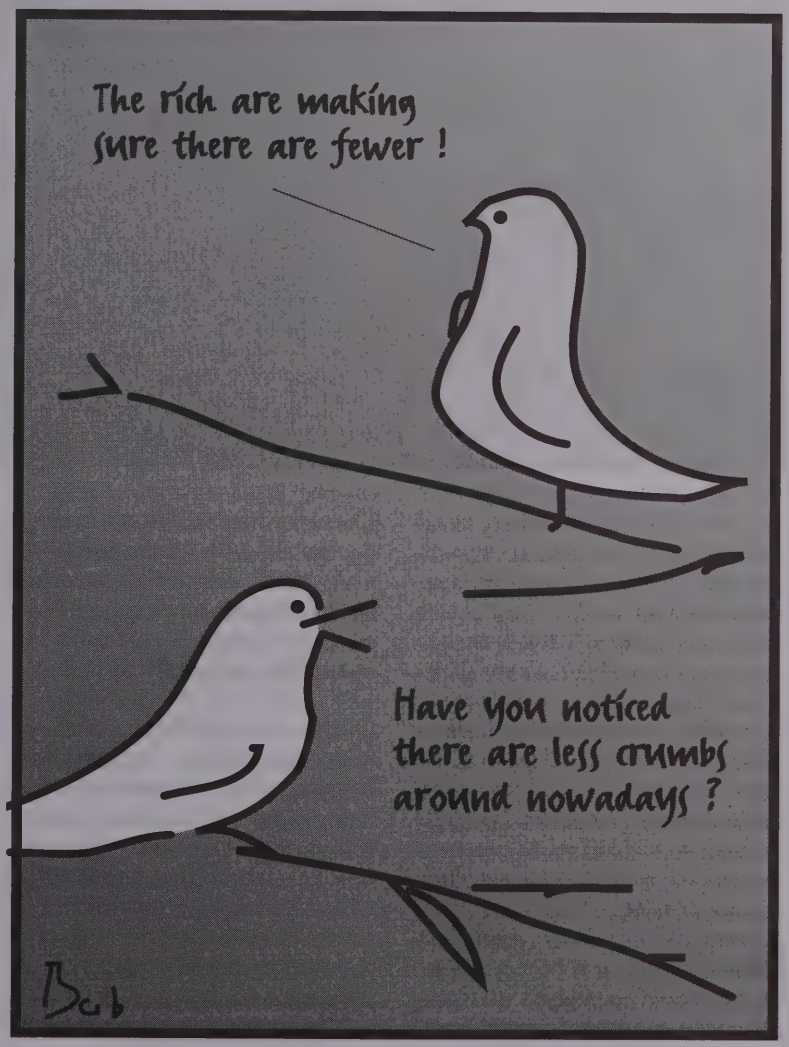
The Light Side of Life



Principles for global corporate responsibility

by David M. Schilling

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The rapid globalization of the international economy poses fundamental challenges for corporations as well as for local, regional, national and international communities. As the global marketplace expands, corporations are faced with questions of what values should guide their operations in diverse countries and cultures. In addition to their traditional business focus, corporations need to address global concerns about human rights, just wages and safe working conditions, child and forced labor, the environment and sustainable community development. These issues will remain high on the agenda of corporations and socially responsible investors into the next century as communities press for socially responsible corporate policies.

Since the 1970s many corporations have moved through stages from being local organizations to national, international and transnational organizations, with some now being described as supra-national. These corporate realities are reflected in their programs, policies and practices through which the corporations demonstrate their relationship with and commitment to communities wherever they operate.

By the early 1990s, transnational corporations controlled 25 percent of the world's productive assets, 70 percent of the products in international trade; 80 percent of the world's land cultivated for export crops, and the major share of the world's technological innovations (Criteria For Sustainable Development Management, United Nations Center on Transnational Corporations, New York, 1991). Corporations now have the capacity to shift resources – finances, machinery, technology, personnel – anywhere in the world to maxi-

mize their competitive position. Traditional methods of monitoring and regulating corporate activities functioning on an old national model are now inadequate when applied to global corporations.

Among the numerous responses to the new global challenges has been the formulation of codes of conduct and guidelines appropriate to the new global situation. Early attempts to create a global code of conduct through the United Nations failed because individual governments were not able to reach legislative assent to a "Code of Accountability for Transnational Corporations", and many companies opposed its creation.

A number of codes have been developed in the last fifteen years and are still viable today. They include: the MacBride Principles on fair employment in Northern Ireland; The Maquiladora Standards of Conduct on fair employment, health and safety, environmental practices and community impact with U.S. companies operating in Mexico; the South African Council of Churches' Code of Business Conduct calling for investment which will help build a just, post-apartheid economy; the CERES Principles which address companies' responsibilities to the environment, and the World Health Organization/UNICEF Code on Infant Formula.

Increasingly, conversations about the need for global codes are taking place in many different forums among community, religious, and human rights groups, shareholders and corporations. Some corporations have responded by adopting global codes and guidelines for their own operations and the operations of their contractors and suppliers.

All corporations, whether they operate locally or globally, have the potential to lay a positive role in communities where they operate. If codes and guidelines lead to building true partnerships among all who have a stake in the health and well-being of communities, then enforceable global guidelines can prove to be a tool for sustainable economic and human development.

Three faith groups – The Ecumenical Committee for Corporate Responsibility of Great Britain (ECCR); The Taskforce on the Churches and Corporate Responsibility of Canada (TCCR), and the Global Corporate Accountability Issue Group of the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility of the USA (ICCR) – hope to contribute to this discussion by the publication of their 28 page document, "Principles for Global Corporate Responsibility: Bench Marks for Measuring Business Performance." (in the 'Corporate Examiner' Vol 24, Nos 2-4, Sept 1st, 1995). The The Principles are rooted in the faith and experience of these three groups which have a long record of working for socially responsible business practices on behalf of member religious organizations.

The theological context written by ICCR declares: "Faith communities measure the global economy not only by what it produces, and its impact on the environment, but by how it touches human life and whether it protects or undermines the dignity of the human person. Economic decisions have human and moral consequences. Human dignity can only be realized and protected in solidarity with others. The protection of human rights-civil, political, social and economic, are minimum standards for social institutions that respect human dignity and social justice. The purpose of this document is to promote positive corporate social responsibility consistent with our responsibility to sustain all God's creation." This is the religious framework for our involvement in the creation of these Principles.

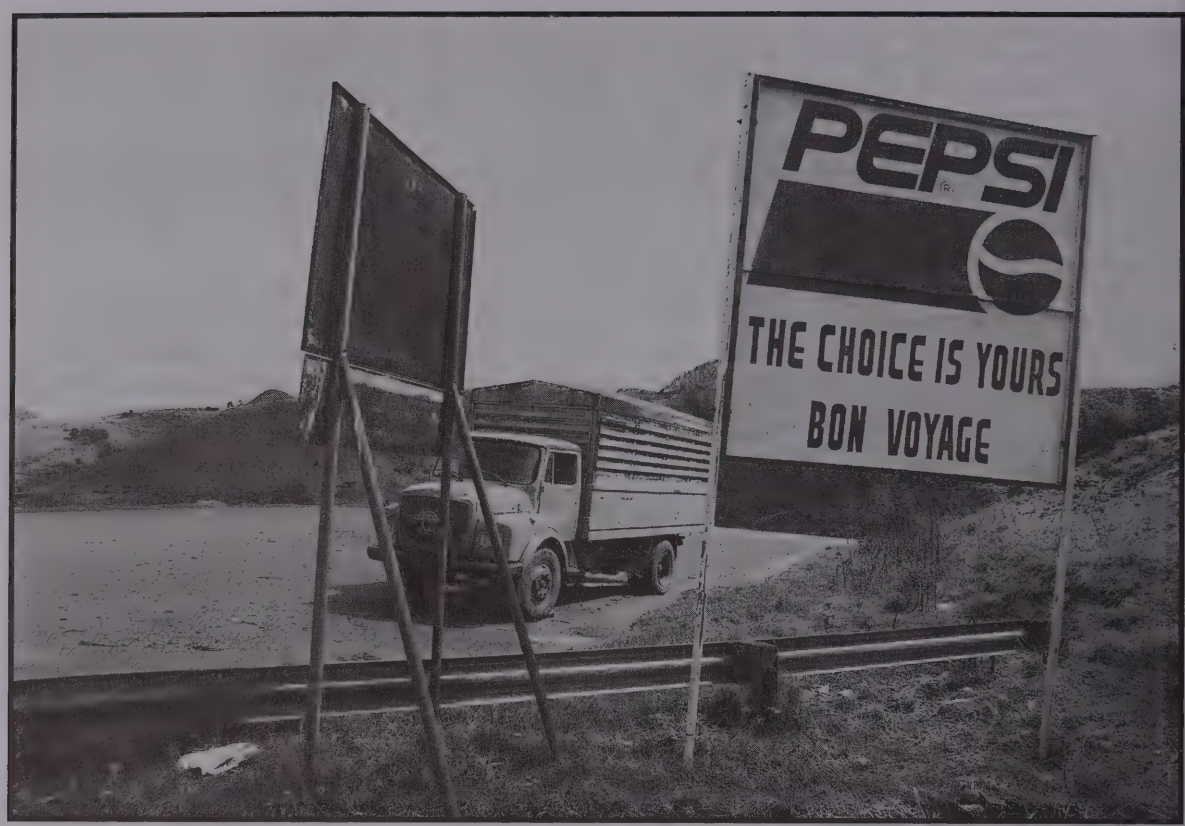
Members of the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility have nearly twenty-five years of experience in engaging corporations in dialogue around country-specific codes and principles. ICCR has supported specific codes of conduct as a way of encouraging change in business performance. Members of ICCR's Global Corporate Accountability Issue Group believe it is essential to have global guidelines which apply to a company's practices wherever on earth the operate.

The "Principles for Global Responsibility" offer important perspectives for consideration by global corporations and the communities affected by their activities.

1) **We propose a new relationship between corporations and communities.** Traditional stakeholder models have emphasized the various stakeholder *within* the corporation – shareholders, employees, consumers, and community groups – thereby making the corporation the center of the model. This document suggests that the corporation needs to recognize itself, and be recognized by others, as among the stakeholders *within each community*. This new model recognizes that the stake is sustainable communities. All segments of the community are thus stakeholder in the community along with corporations.

2) This document stresses the importance of **sustainable economic development**. By development we do not necessarily mean industrialization, but the process of building equitable, productive, and participatory structures to increase the economic self-sufficiency of communities and their surrounding regions. Both communities and corporations need sustainable development for long-term viability. By building relationships among the various stakeholders in communities with a vision of sustaining resources for future generations, steps towards sustainable development can be taken as part of a long-term approach.

3) **Respect for the dignity of every person, and for collective and individual human rights, is central to these Principles.** This means that special attention must be paid to the fulfillment of the basic needs of persons who have been placed on the margins of the global economy. Many of the world's poor are women who work for low wages in transnational corporations. One measurement of the ef-



fectiveness of global codes would be how the standard of living of workers, especially women, provides a sustainable wage leading to the development of sustainable communities worldwide.

The "Principles for Global Corporate Responsibility" is the outcome of the collaboration of ECCR, TCCR and ICCR. Working committees from each organization have subjected the whole text to study and revision by all three partners to the process. We realize that there are other critical areas yet to be addressed. These include, but are not limited to, the rights of Indigenous Peoples, the impact of global corporations on children and the role of women in the global economy. The three groups will be working on these and other additions to include in the next round of the document.

ECCR, ICCR, TCCR released the "Principles," in September, 1995, to open Round One, a several year period during which the partners are actively inviting comments and critique of the document from all interested parties, including:

- religious, human rights', Indigenous, labor, consumer, environmental and women's groups;
- individuals concerned about economic justice, sustainable development, the globalization of the economy and the role of corporations;
- corporations that are facing the challenges of working in a new global context.

To facilitate a broad process of consultation we are translating the document into a number of languages. Our immediate goal is to engage a diversity of groups and individuals in the discussion about global corporate responsibility. Our long-range goal is to affect the way corporations relate to people, communities and the environment. During Round One the three groups are receiving comments and new material. Already we have received helpful suggestions from religious groups, human rights groups, socially responsible investors and corporations. We plan to release a new improved document in 1998.

You are invited to order a copy of the "Principles" from ICCR, read it and share it with your group and network. Then send us your comments, recommended changes and additions.

We hope the "Principles for Global Corporate Responsibility" will play a role in creating a new global climate where management of economic and environmental resources is developed cooperatively by all stakeholder, and is directed toward sustainability, in the service of the needs of all humanity.

Rev. David, M. Schilling is on the program staff of Global Corporate Accountability, ICCR; Sr. Ruth Rosenbaum, T.C.is the co-chair, Global Corporate Accountability Issue Group, ICCR.

Orders for "Principles for Global Corporate Responsibility" can be sent to: ICCR Principles Project, 475 Riverside Drive, Room 566, New York, NY, USA 10115-0050; phone 212/870-2928; fax 212/870-2023.

The bank that lets you invest in poor people

by Janet Somerville

ANCASTER, Ontario - It permeated the atmosphere like piped-in oxygen: determination; and something else: call it zest. On a hot late June day, scores of people of every human colour, with their sleeves rolled up, shouting with laughter and buzzing with plans, were getting ready for an annual general meeting.

Meet the poor folks' World Bank. Meet the World Council of Churches' globalizers-from-below. Meet the Ecumenical Development Cooperative Society (EDCS). You could call it (if you're a Canadian with a sense of history) the Antigonish Movement of the post-national age.

EDCS is a big-visioned offshoot of the World Council of Churches. It's 20 years old and seems to be having a growth spurt. And former CNT (Catholic New Times), Sister Frances Ryan, has become the president of its board.

...positive discrimination in favour of women as economic agents...

In an era when almost every "donor" government is cutting back sharply on foreign aid, EDCS wants church people everywhere to invest directly in the economic development of groups and communities too poor to be credit worthy in the eyes of ordinary banks. It wants to sell "shares in development" to everyone who cares about shrinking the world's rich-poor gap.

They mean "invest" literally. A local church, or a denominational head office, or an individual belonging to a national EDCS "support association" doesn't just give money to EDCS and write it off as a grant. EDCS treats the money as an investment, and undertakes to pay the investor a two per cent return per annum. (The difference between that rate of return and the higher rate that you'd get from a conventional investment certificate is the "gift" element.)

In turn, EDCS doesn't give gifts to poor people and their cooperative enterprises. It gives credit. Low-cost loans, but real loans with credible repayment schedules.

Why loans? Because they work. Not every micro-enterprise needs an outright grant. And anyway, EDCS thinks that grants can ruin "a healthy economic attitude" for a group that has to go on struggling after the donor has gone home.

To qualify, you have to be too poor to get a loan from your friendly local (or international) banker. You have to be working cooperatively, in a way that benefits the whole community you live in. And your "business", besides solving the problem of subsistence for the poor people who are part of it, also has to qualify as sustainable development, economically and environmentally.

"Commercial banks lend to individuals, but we make loans to cooperative groups" explained Mary Mwenda, EDCS project officer for Kenya. "We don't have to tell people to form groups; we find them ready-made. Poor people know they have to pool their resources for survival."

Mwenda checked off a few more contrasts between her present work for EDCS and her former work for a mainstream bank in Nairobi.

"Banks charge too much interest, and they look for lots of collateral security," she said. "What we look for as security is the commitment and initiative of the group that's applying. And of course, EDCS loans are cheaper for the borrowers.

"Finally, we're not looking for the business opportunity that will give us the highest return on our capital. We're looking for the one that will most improve life for poor people, and contribute the most to local sustainable development."

edcs

With emphasis, she added one more thought. "EDCS is especially good at helping women move forward. In most of Africa, women don't own assets like land or machinery. But EDCS doesn't see that as an obstacle to giving women loans."

Increasingly, EDCS projects "positively discriminate in favour of women as economic agents," to quote its 1994 Annual Report. It has been leaning in that direction since 1989, when its board formally decided "to give priority to women because women are disadvantaged, because women disperse income more widely through a community, and because women are reliable partners with high rates of loan repayment."

Canada's Heather Johnston, a Presbyterian lay woman who has long been a mover and shaker in World Council of Churches circles, beams with satisfaction when she talks about the progress EDCS has made on gender analysis.

"When I first came on to the board, every project sponsored by EDCS was run by men", she recalled. "But strong women were beginning to appear on the board level. We started to notice and point out the dominance of men in the economic activities we were choosing to support. So things began to change."

Sitting beside Heather Johnston is the president of the board of EDCS, Sister Frances Ryan. Currently social action director for the diocese of London, Canada, Ryan is a veteran activist around economic justice issues. She nods her agreement on the importance of gender analysis in development issues.

"This is one of the gifts this organisation has brought into my life", says Ryan. "EDCS is a force for bringing about gender balance and for improving the situation of women even in some of the most difficult economic settings in the world."

But that's not all that Ryan loves about the organisation she now presides over.

"I think EDCS is one of the most viable ways of working out our Gospel call to empower the poor", she says emphatically. "It's also one of the few ways in which the churches themselves are challenged to share their resources on a worldwide basis. And best of all, it's ecumenical."

The General Manager of EDCS is a cheerful whirlwind of Dutch energy named Gert van Maanen. A lawyer, he used to be a managing director of ING, a leading commercial bank in Holland. But his conversion to poor people's economics isn't recent. Van Maanen was intimately involved in the formation of EDCS, two decades ago.

I began an interview by asking him about the effect of recent cutbacks in foreign aid, and was startled by his answer.

"To a certain extent I don't mind the cutbacks," he says. "Government aid programmes almost never benefit the bottom 50 percent of the population of a poor country. Usually they are quite effective at enriching the top two percent of the people.

"Well over 80 percent of overseas development assistance (ODA) goes into infrastructure, or loans to buy technology or whatever. So you could cut ODA dramatically without necessarily hurting the poorest people", van Maanen says.

Van Maanen talks enthusiastically about the changes poor people are bringing about in their own communities by getting access to credit on modest repayment terms. Stories and examples spill out of him, until the market women of

...more than 35 million dollars of the 48 million US dollars outstanding with project partners, had been repaid by groups of disadvantaged people to whom no one would give a dime...

THE ECUMENICAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATIVE SOCIETY (EDCS)

EDCS was established by the World Council of Churches in 1975. Its goals are:

- To work with poor people in their efforts for self-reliance through productive enterprises by providing loans, guarantees or investment capital.
- To provide an investment vehicle for churches and others to use in order to participate in development as a liberating process aimed at economic growth, social justice and self-reliance.
- To be a viable business and model for a more just economic order demonstrating that an enterprise can operate on Christian principles helping poor people and yet being self-sustaining.

The finances originate from among the member churches of the WCC and others who subscribe to the goals of the EDCS. Individuals can participate through obtaining certificates of shares. In 1995 the WCC Central Committee took a historic decision by resolving that by the year 2000, 10% of the General Funds and other appropriate funds be invested in the EDCS. In 1996, this should already be 5%.

The address of the International Support Office of the EDCS is:
P.C.Hooftlaan 3, 3818 HG Amersfoort, the Netherlands. Tel: +31-33-63 31 22, Fax: +31-33-65 03 36.

the Ivory Coast, or the garbage dump squatters of the Transkei practically march across the lawn right in front of us.

"Poor people are great economic partners," says van Maanen with passion. "You can count on them. Co-ops founded in adverse circumstances by poor people are the ones that hang in and succeed. In EDCS we're banking on something very tough and reliable: the existential determination of people to survive and show their children a better day. The poverty trap isn't some kind of virus. It's walls around people. When you open up a way out, whole groups march right out of that so-called poverty trap."

Van Maanen loves the fact that loans repaid to EDCS immediately turn back into working capital for other poor people.

This is how the 1995 report sums it up: "...the ECDS formula proved its worth over 20 years of giving credit to the poor. At the end of 1995, three out of every four dollars EDCS had invested in these so-called unbankable people, consisted of repaid or recycled money. In other words: more than 35 million dollars of the 48 million US dollars outstanding with project partners, had been repaid by groups of disadvantaged people to whom no one would give a dime. It is now recycled money to be used again and again by people of equal capacities and equal strength."

Source: Catholic New International, reprinted and edited with kind permission.

God's long range plan and EDCS

A reflection on 2 Peter 3: 8-14

by Rob van Drimmelen

1996 is the 20th anniversary of EDCS. As can be expected from a young adult, EDCS is presently giving much thought to the future by discussing its long range plans. Should we consolidate our position for a while or should we take some risks by vigorously expanding our work? It is perfectly logical that a professional organization like EDCS addresses this question. However, EDCS is also an ecumenical organization. Therefore it is appropriate to reflect on the question: "What about *God's* long range plans, and how do they relate to EDCS?"

Peter reminds us that we can look forward with hope because in God's long range plans we have the promise of new heavens and a new earth. People of faith can live by this promise. According to the letter to the Hebrews, "faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen" (Heb.11:1). However, this conviction is seriously tested when we consider the world situation today. The things we see are not the things we hoped for: war in Bosnia Herzegovina, testing of weapons of mass destruction. God's long range plans seem to be very long range indeed! We start to doubt Peter's words which say: "It is not that the Lord is slow in fulfilling His promise..." The Lord really seems to be slow when we remember Rwanda and Burundi. The Lord seems to be slow when we see the favelas and shanty towns, when we consider the growing gap between rich and poor, and the ongoing destruction of the environment, to mention just a few things. All this is a far cry from signs of new heavens and a new earth, the home of justice.

God seems to be very slow indeed; sometimes we may even think that God is indifferent to all the people on this earth who cannot wait, not one year, not even one day, and who echo Psalm 90: "How long, O Lord?".

The idea of the Almighty God falls to pieces when we remember Auschwitz, Hiroshima, Vietnam, and all the personal tragedies which take place every day. As a Ruler, as a King and as a Saviour, God seems to remain invisible. "Why do you sleep, O Lord? Why do you hide your face? Why do you forget our affliction and oppression?", asks Psalm 44.

A first answer comes from Deuteronomy (31:18): "On that day, I will hide my face because of all the evil they have done in turning to other gods". *This* we can understand: God may be angry like we can sometimes be angry – even in the beautiful EDCS family. But immediately the question comes: what if *innocent people* become the victims of this anger when God's face is hidden? Has nothing happened after Psalm 44 was written? What about Christmas, Easter, Pentecost? Are we deceiving ourselves or is God deceiving us?

One of the good things in the letter of Peter is that he addresses those who doubt; he even calls them "my friends". Those who doubt, are not second rate Christians. Peter probably remembered that when the resurrected Christ appeared, some adored Him while others had their doubts. Or did the two groups overlap? Can we really make such a sharp distinction between those who adore and those who doubt? Don't we often pray *because* we doubt? And don't we doubt because we pray?

The "friends" whom Peter addresses, are not in doubt because of intellectual reasoning. The friends are prisoners who shake and rattle their chains. For Peter it is not hard to imagine that they may believe that God is slow. Peter himself also had his moments of doubt. Did not he betray Jesus? Maybe he betrayed Jesus because he was disappointed and impatient: a Messiah who lets Himself be caught by soldiers, a Messiah operating at snail's pace cannot be a real Messiah. For Peter this was a real question and, at first sight, he does not provide a real answer. That with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, does not mean anything to us, and especially not to those for whom the suffering takes so long. What an awkward long range plan: one day is like a thousand years! Try to explain that to those who suffer, to those who are poor! This talk is too easy. We cannot see things through God's eyes, we see reality through the eyes of human beings.

Yet, humanity has made some progress in the way in which it sees suffering. For centuries, we have tried to explain it in one way or another. First we said it is a punishment, and some are still thinking this way. But how can we maintain that a handicapped child is a punishment? Then we said it is divine pedagogy: God wants to teach us something. But is this solution not worse than the problem itself? Then came the third explanation: God does not want it, people are doing it. God is standing by, powerless. But a powerless God is not worth believing in. From such a God we have nothing to expect, never mind that God is love. There is already enough powerless love in this world. An all-powerful, all-mighty God is also no solution to the dilemma; such a God cannot be love since suffering is allowed to take place.

God wants it, said former generations. God does not want it, said a new generation. Both answers are not satisfactory: how do we know what God wants? "Cloud and mist enfold Him", says Psalm 97. This is why Peter says: one thing should not escape you, namely that everything escapes you! One of the greatest temptations for human thinking is that we make carved images of God, and project our self-conceit on God's incomprehensiveness.

A tip of the veil is lifted in verse 9 which says that God waits because nobody should perish and everyone should have the opportunity to come to repentance. God wants to give us a chance like in the story of Jonah. God wants us to hurry up: work to hasten the coming of the Day of God, says verse 12. Peter does not refer to a small group of elected people: *all* should come to repentance, *all* people should have a chance, nobody should be written off.

While we are waiting for God to act, Peter says that God is waiting for us! Apparently human beings are more important in God's long range plans than we may think. *We* had to prevent Auschwitz, Rwanda, Bosnia. *We* have to act. We have to listen to prayers of people. God has accomplished His/Her part of the task and has cleared the way for us to follow up. God set the long term goal, it is our task to hasten the coming of the day of God. It is in this context that we should see the long range plans for EDCS.

God is waiting for us to act. But what does God do while waiting? God is writing a book, according to Malachi. Not the kind of 'book' that EDCS Board members receive in preparation for a meeting, full of financial data and balance sheets. God is not a bookkeeper, as economists may think, registering our good deeds on the credit side and our failures on the debit side. God is writing a memorial book and only the good things are registered. Also the small things that escape us, are noted down. God does not only see the mother Teresas but also the struggles of countless anonymous people; the people we met in the remote agricultural projects in Arequipa, the women knitting and sewing clothes in Lima. God treasures their deeds, their tears, their banners. The book is kept in heaven but what is in it, happens on earth. God writes history, not 'His story' but our story. God rejoices when things go well but suffers when things go wrong: "I heard the cry of my people"(Ex.3:9). Auschwitz, Rwanda, Bosnia: one Good Friday lasts one thousand years for God. God was killed in Rwanda, raped in Bosnia, imprisoned in China.

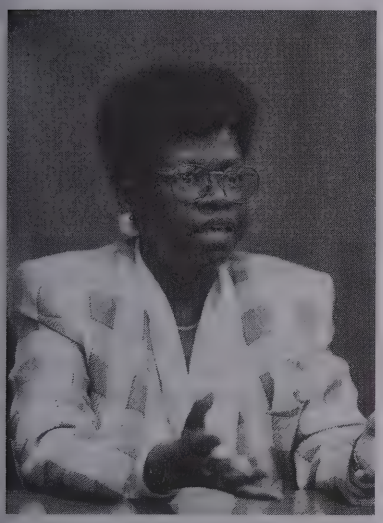
But God also rejoices with us. For a mother in labour, the birth-pangs seem to last one thousand years, but as soon as the child is born, the pain seemed to be reduced to one day because of the joy.

In his second letter, Peter calls himself Simeon Peter, instead of Simon. He uses his Jewish name, maybe in reference to Simeon who waited and waited in the temple until he received Jesus in his arms. At that moment of surprise, Simeon's whole life, became one day. Peter tries to teach us to read the clock in a different way: when it seems to be too late, it is only too early.

Three fragments of the mystery of God become visible: God waits for people, God *suffers* with

people, and God *surprises* people. May these fragments guide us as three flickering candles when we celebrate the 20th anniversary of EDCS and as we discuss our long range plans. We are working and planning together because God is waiting for us, the ball is in our camp. Christ has shown the direction, He prepared the way, but we have to walk the road. Perhaps one day, much to our surprise, humanity will witness the fulfilment of God's long range plans and see new heavens and a new earth, the home of justice.

This is a slightly edited text of a meditation led by Rob van Drimmelen at the EDCS Board meeting in Ancaster, Canada, 27 June 1995



In January this year Jean Sindab, former PCR staff member, known to friends, colleagues and allies around the world, died in New York. Although she had been ill for some many months, her death came as a great shock. She embodied all the best spirits of commitment, perception and energy in the struggle against racism. Present PCR staff member Deborah Robinson, also of the USA, writes her personal tribute.

Tribute to Dr. Jean Sindab

July 1996

Dear Jean,

Girl, I don't know how it is up there, but it's a trip down here!!! Sometimes I think you must be looking down at us and just shaking your head or laughing. But most probably you are fussing up there because of the worsening conditions down here. I bet you are also trying to organize people up there to do something about it. Aren't you?!! You always were a master organizer! Anyway, in this letter, I just wanted to remind you of some of the good times the two of us shared and what those moments meant to me. Don't worry, although I could write a book, I will only mention a few things.

I think one of your happiest moments was May 10, 1994, at the inauguration of President Nelson Mandela. Neither of us had special invitations, so we were on the huge field among the masses!! But it was great. You toy-toyed with some of the youth and I got it on videotape. But you almost had a heart attack when first the Air Force jets flew overhead, then the helicopters (each with the flag of South Africa attached to poles underneath) and then especially when the planes flew over with the colours of the South African flag streaming from their exhaust. They painted a rainbow of freedom in the sky. We were both in tears and you declared that Nelson Mandela was your President!! I know that day was a culmination of all your fantastic anti-apartheid work at the Washington Office on Africa and at the World Council of Churches.

You know, a close second to that day was the concluding worship after the Gang Summit in Kansas City on May 2, 1993. All of us were transfixed because of that service and because the events of that day were so powerful; Sam Mann's sermon, Yvonne Delk's prayer and especially when the two young brothers from opposite gangs, who were supposed to kill each other, came to the pulpit and dropped their colours (took off the red and blue bandannas, which indicated they were from opposing gangs, and let them drop to the floor indicating a truce). I know your commitment to the youth in Kansas City in particular, but all youth in these street organizations or nations as they call it, was firmly established on that day and continued to be your passion.

While at the National Council of Churches, you played such an important role organizing the churches around issues of environmental justice. I remember the Black Churches' Summit on the Environment in December 1993. You really pulled that one off! Getting Vice-President Al Gore there, all those Black Church leaders and over 200 participants! It was a coup. I really admired the way you were able to mobilize on that issue. No one doubted your commitment when you insisted on attending the Orthodox Summit on the Environment 10-12 November 1995, even though you had just received your final diagnosis. You wanted to go to Baltimore because you had organized the event and you always took your responsibilities very seriously. At that point you couldn't eat any solid food and were in constant pain unless you took those "street-drug strength" pain killers. But you attended the sessions when you could and tried to make sure things were going okay. The

Summit was a resounding success.

You know, you have helped me in so many ways, but of course your work on the U.S. Campaign on Racism as a Violation of Human Rights was what I personally appreciated the most. While you were at WCC, you took the original request for hearings and developed the vision for a programme. You pushed for the hearings while you were a staff member of PCR in 1989 and became co-coordinator for the New York site in 1994. I remember all the conversations we had about how to go forward. It was a struggle, but you were able to marshall all the necessary forces to make the first hearing and exposure experience for the International Eminent Persons team very powerful.

But what you gave most to all of your friends was love and inspiration. When I visited you in Geneva in January 1989, I was on my way to climb Mt. Kilimanjaro. You had set up appointments for me to see several people at the WCC, but you always introduced me by saying that I was going to climb Kilimanjaro! You never mentioned any of my more professional abilities and I was a little embarrassed. As I was leaving Geneva you gave me two cards. On the envelope of one was written, "As You Leave Geneva" and on the other you had written, "As You Climb". You told me not to read the first until I got on the train and not to read the second until I started my climb. Do you remember what you said in the second card? You said, *"Go forth on your saga, your journey, your odyssey. Go forth with love and good vibes from sisters all over the globe. You climb for us all - for the sisters in the barrios, the ghettoes, the reservations, the townships, the refugee camps, the favellas. All the places where we are left with no chances to live out our dreams, our goals. When you get tired, when you doubt if you can make it - remember our daily walks of 10-20 miles for water, our daily struggle to feed our children and ourselves, to get simple medicine to keep us alive, to have a "home", to get pencils and papers (forget books) so we may be educated. And still we struggle, and still we hope and still we dream. Against the odds, always! But somehow we do survive and so will you! You, my sister, climb in the tradition of our mothers and grandmothers; Mama Harriett, Mama Rosa Parks, Mama Sojourner, Mama Mary McCloud. You be climbing higher and higher. You be our inspiration. You be carrying the torch. You be carrying our message. You be saying to the world: Don't mess with us. We Black Women. We be Bad!"*

Many of your friends, especially the women, received cards of inspiration like that from you. It was your love for Black and Indigenous women that was the driving force behind you creating the Women Under Racism Programme at WCC. Through this programme, many women around the world experienced your love, encouragement and solidarity. Although we all feel such a great loss by your premature departure, many of us owe a special part of that "flame of activism" that burns brightly inside of us, to you. Your cards, letters and words of encouragement still inspire us to this day.

Jean, you were, are and will always be my friend, mentor, colleague, soul-mate on a spiritual journey, sister, and sistah! I say sistah because you were a strong, brilliant and beautiful black woman. You fought tirelessly for our people, but at the same time you were a citizen of the world and fought for oppressed people everywhere!

In closing, I don't know if the song by Mariah Carey and Boys 2 Men, "Some Sweet Day", was out before you left us, but now I always think of you when I hear it. And yes, I usually cry. But Jean, some sweet day, we will be together! Until that time, remember that I will always love you. Pray for me and please continue being my guardian angel.

Your Sistah In the Spirit,

Debbie

JOTtINGS

Unit Staff experiences shared

The Unit III ***Consultant on Indigenous***, Eugenio Poma Anaguyana from Bolivia, writes:

"Between May 31 and June 7, I participated on behalf of the Indigenous Programme of the WCC in two important meetings in India.

The first one was the National Consultation on "Dalits and Indigenous Peoples" in the city of Raipur, in which eighty three participants from Christian, Buddhist, Sheik and Muslim faith backgrounds gave an overview of the current situation of life in the Indian context. At the end, they emphasised the need for a consolidation of the joint struggle between Indigenous Tribal peoples and Dalits, identifying common issues that need to be addressed.

The second meeting was the "Consultation on Common Dalit Ideology" in Delhi. Here more than twenty well known theologians, historians and sociologists met for three days with the purpose of constructing a "Dalit Ideology", using as a starting point the common issues that unite them as a people."

«««

Unit III ***Youth staff member*** Donnalie Edwards from Antigua and Barbuda reports, *"During the period April 18th-24th, 1996 a regional workshop on Caribbean Women and Economic Justice was held in Antigua W.I.*

This workshop/consultation was organized by the WCC Women & Youth Teams. The PCR team was also represented at this meeting. The workshop was hosted by the CCC Antigua Subregional office.

35 women representing the four subregions of the Caribbean attended this meeting which focused on women & economic justice issues in the region as well as a one day training seminar on Advocacy & Lobbying.

Participants to the meeting worked out strategies on economic justice to be taken up by the church-

es and the various regional organizations which the women represented in the next few years.

WCC Staff members with me at this meeting were Thembi Majola of the Women's Team and Marilia Schüller from PCR".

«««««

In June, ***ECOS staff member*** Rob van Drimmelen attended a meeting which brought together women and men from the Protestant development agencies in Europe and the South to stimulate learning on economics and development from a gender perspective. The meeting was organized by GOOD (Gender Orientation On Development) which is funded by member agencies of APRODEV (Association of World Council of Churches-related agencies in Europe).

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International Affairs staff member Salpy Eskidjian as responsible for a meeting in Rio, within Unit III's Programme to Overcome Violence. She reports, *"I met with a group of people engaged in creative, church-related efforts in peace-building to help us define a clear focused challenge to, what has been described as, the global culture of violence.*

The meeting concentrated on looking at ways of mobilizing church and ecumencial actions to overcome violence in a way which would equip them to make a forceful common commitment for building a culture of peace. As a short-term focus for the POV from now until the 4th WCC Assembly the group proposed to concentrate on communicating what is happening in "the city". We will select a number of cities as centres of population, commerce,finance,political power and culture and which visibly demonstrate both the destructive force of violence, as well as significant initiatives of building peace and justice, in order to learn how they overcome violence, to collect and reflect on their expertise, and to share hope and a spirituality for life".

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Deborah Robinson (of the ***PCR team***) and Edna Orteza (***ECOS team***) attended the Mandated Working Group on Education (MWGE) meeting in Bogor, Indonesia. The MWGE welcomed the results of the 'Survey on Education in the WCC' conducted by the Staff Coordination team on Education, a cross-Unit staff team. They asked that the information be further analysed and the entire WCC staff be engaged in discussing the implications from the findings. They also asked each Unit Commission/Executive Group to discuss seriously the recommednations made and devise mechanisms for implementation. In addition they hoped that, in the period between Harare and the next WCC Assembly, the WCC would intensify its commitment to the centrality of education in the work of the WCC.

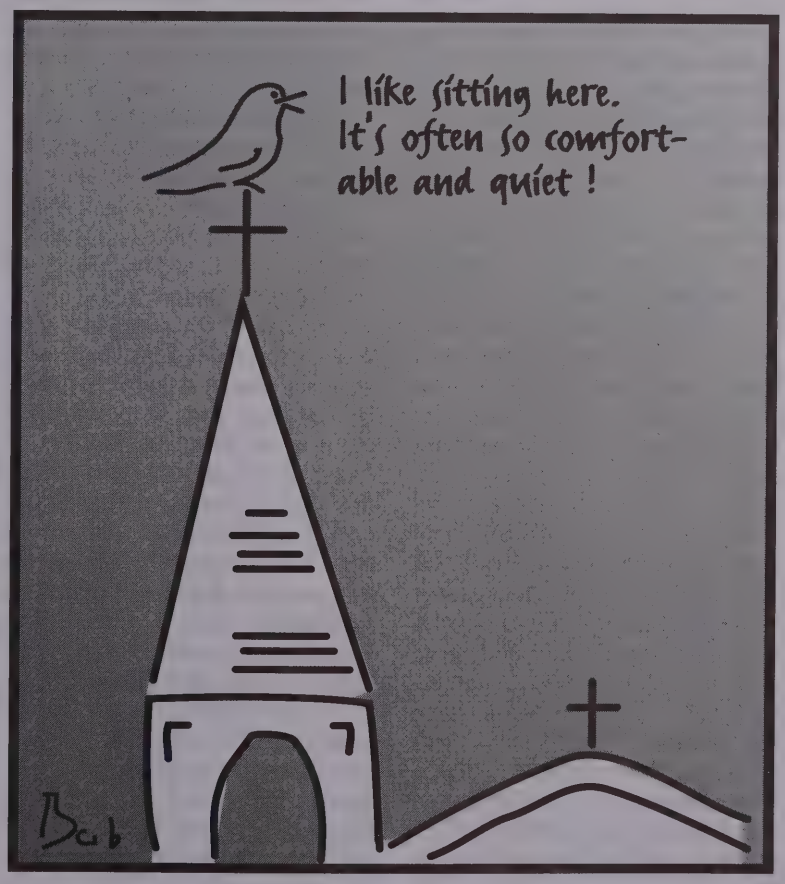
Documents from each of the meetings referred to are available by writing to the staff members mentioned at: Unit III, World Council of Churches, P.O.Box 2100, 1211 Geneva 2, Switzerland.

Departures from Unit III

Ms Anu Talvivaara (Orthodox Church of Finland) has been appointed to work as Associate Director of the Office for Income Coordination and Development of the WCC from July 22, 1996. She served almost six years as the Executive Secretary of the Youth Team of Unit III and was member of ECHOES editorial team for the past three issues.

Peter Brock, of the Unit III Youth Team, has returned to Australia at the end of his contract period with the WCC. He served almost eight years with the Youth Team, including through the difficult days of WCC restructuring in the early 90s.

The Light Side of Life



Mining and Indigenous Peoples Consultation

The WCC helped arrange a Consultation in London of representatives from Indigenous Nations and communities, in 24 countries, engaged in land claim struggles against mining transnational companies. After a successful eight day meeting they published a declaration and a list of 'Hot Spots' of immediate concern.

DECLARATION

Mining and Indigenous Peoples Consultation
London, England 6-16 May 1996

We, the representatives of the Indigenous Peoples Organizations, Communities and Nations, from Peru, Bolivia, Brazil, Venezuela, Panama, Costa Rica, Mexico, Colombia, Guyana, French Guiana, Suriname, in Central and South America; from the United States of America and Canada of North America; from Australia, Fiji, India, the Philippines, Papua New Guinea and Irian Jaya of Asia and the South Pacific; from Namibia and Ghana of Africa; and from Samiland, The Russian Federation, and Greenland of the Arctic;

Convened together for the Consultation on Mining and Indigenous Peoples on May 6-16, 1996 in London, England, after deep sharing and analysis of each others' situation through democratic discussion, we are convinced that we as Indigenous Peoples have the inherent right to Self-Determination; the inalienable right to land and resources; the right to self governance; the right to be respected as distinct peoples with our own social organization, customs and traditions, and the fundamental right to life and survival.

We are ALARMED at how our inherent and fundamental rights as Indigenous Peoples are systematically trampled upon, disregarded and violated by the dominant world neo-liberal economy through their transnational corporations in the name of greed and profit.

We are further alarmed that these transnational corporations make use of international funding institutions such as the International Monetary Fund, World Bank and Regional Funding institutions and even the United Nations, to impose, coerce and deceive sovereign nations of their policies and programs. International organizations, such as GATT and the World Trade Organization, and their imposition of Structural Adjustment Programmes and privatization, result in furthering the national oppression and exploitation of Indigenous Peoples.

We recognize from our universal experience that the worldwide transnational mining industry works in complicity with our national governments to aggressively enter into our territories, to take our lands and territories and exploit our natural resources, bringing about permanent damage to the air, land, forests and waters, displacing and killing the Indigenous Peoples, resulting in ethnocide and genocide.

We are UNITED in the knowledge that there is nothing that justifies the destruction of our air, our forests, our waters, our lands and territories, or the destruction of our lives and identities as peoples, and that there is no development that can be constructed with the blood and death of our Peoples and the destruction of Mother Earth.

We are INSPIRED by the wisdom and knowledge of our peoples and our heroic ancestors' tradition of the defense and protection of our lands and territories and the assertion of our rights, existence and identity.

We are CONSCIOUS of the need to unite and strengthen our mutual support in the struggle to achieve full recognition and realisation of our right to self-determination.

We struggle for our survival and in defense of our lives, our lands and territories, our own traditional forms of development and our own socio-economic, cultural and political well-being as Indigenous Peoples.

We therefore condemn in the strongest terms the transnational mining companies, armed with international and national organizations, and multi-lateral agreements, with the complicity of the states and their national laws, their denial of our existence, their land-grabbing, their continued destruction of our land and territories and our air and our environment, their exploitation of our resources, and the continuing decimation of our peoples.

We therefore unanimously conclude:

1. To continue strengthening our organizations, communities and nations so that we can be stronger to defend and assert our rights to self-determination;

❷ To broaden the support of the Indigenous Peoples struggle for self-determination by linking it with the struggles of other oppressed groups, sectors or classes within each others countries and throughout the world.

❸ To demand recognition of our right to life and our right to survive as Indigenous Peoples, and condemn the violations of our inherent and fundamental rights.

❹ To demand recognition of Indigenous Peoples inalienable rights to our lands and territories and our waters, including surface and subsurface resources in accordance with, and respect for, Indigenous Peoples traditional forms of collective ownership and control.

❺ To demand that Indigenous Peoples be consulted with, and full and comprehensive information be provided in a timely manner, when mining activities are being considered for sites located on Indigenous Peoples lands. That the free and informed consent of Indigenous Peoples be obtained before any mining development can occur on Indigenous Peoples lands.

❻ To support adoption of the United Nations draft declaration on the rights of Indigenous Peoples as drafted by the UN Working Group on Indigenous Populations, without any substantive change or amendment.

❼ To create an alliance among Indigenous Peoples in defense of the Mother Earth and our human rights and fundamental freedoms beginning with the participants of this conference, in order to continue our efforts against mining and its destructive effects on our communities.

❽ To evaluate situations, plan solutions, and carry out actions in defense of our lands and territories, air, forests, waterways, coastal waters and other sources of life within our territories, in conjunction with other cultural, environmental, religious and organizations with common interests in solidarity with Indigenous Peoples and their aspirations.

❾ To support the Declaration of Beijing on Indigenous Women written and adopted at the 4th World Conference of the United Nations on Women held in September 1995; in particular, to condemn the violations of human rights of Indigenous Women committed by mining companies and governments and to demand an investigation of violations of women's rights through the trafficking and trading of women, and acts of discrimination against women, and further that these be considered and punished as crimes.

❿ To demand the health and well being of our children and to condemn the violation, exploitation and exposure to contamination created by mining efforts; further, to demand a healthy and safe environment for our children especially in those communities where mining activities occur.

⓫ To propose our united action in opposing and resisting the strategy of the world globalization of the economy, and the world wide exploitation of workers, as these policies produce the concentration of wealth and power against our peoples and convert the Indigenous mine worker into a subordinate and disposable element.

⓬ To demand labour policies that integrally meet the Indigenous worker's needs and rights that dignify his or her role as craftsman and creator of wealth and well-being.

MINING AND INDIGENOUS PEOPLES CONSULTATION

Potential 'Hot Spots' – areas of immediate concern

- The community of Nieuw Koffiekamp in Suriname, and the Maroon and Samarakan peoples, are threatened by a gold mine which will be operated by Golden Star and Cambior in the next two years. The two Canadian-based companies were responsible for the Omai gold mine disaster in neighbouring Guyana in 1995.

- Hundreds of thousands of Indigenous People living in the Amazon basin are threatened by multinational mining operations. Open cast mining in the provinces of Zulia and Guajira, Venezuela, is having a disastrous effect on the Indigenous communities as a result of the environmental pollution affecting water, forests and air and the way of life of the Wayuu, Yukpa and Anu.

- The lives of Indigenous Peoples in Papua New Guinea are threatened by major multinational corporations exploiting natural Indigenous resources. The major multinational corporations are Broken Hill Proprietary (BHP) of Australia and Metal Mining Corporation of Canada in Ok Tedi, the Porgera and Misima Gold Mines of Canadian-owned Placer Pacific, Tolukuma Gold Mine (a subsidiary of MIM Australia), and Lihir Gold Mine of CRA-RTZ - effectively a recolonisation of the Indigenous Peoples of Papua New Guinea.

- It is the same CRA-RTZ corporation which has caused destruction in Bougainville and led to the blockade and ongoing conflict.

- The Amungme and Kamoro peoples of West Papua have seen their land and resources exploited by Freeport McMoran - RTZ and witnessed human

rights abuses at the hands of the Indonesian armed forces and Freeport security. The Amungme and Kamoro demand recognition of their existence and rights as Indigenous Peoples and that Freeport-RTZ clean up the polluted rivers and affected lands.

- The Teleyt people of the Kemerovo region in the Russian Federation are seriously affected by the open cast mining activities of state-owned ROSUGOL. All 2500 Teleyt live in five villages and are surrounded by mining development. Since their villages are built on rich coal fields, their existing village site are endangered.

- Timbisha Shoshone tribe, California, has received a removal order from US federal authorities to relinquish the last remnant of its traditional homelands in Death Valley, California. The Secretary of Interior will force the tribe to give up the tiny 40 acres of ancestral land for C.R. Briggs Mining Project to exploit the area for gold.

- The proposed Exxon/Rio Algom copper and gold exploitation on, or near, Mole Lake reservation, Crandon, Wisconsin, threatens the health, habits and traditional livelihoods of the Sokaogon Chippewa community.

- Following the announcement of the nickel find at Voisey's Bay in 1995, several hundred companies are staking out over 280,000 claims on the land of the Innuit and Innu Nation - all without their consent.

- More than a million of the 40 million tribal people of India have been forcibly removed to make way for mines since the country's independence in 1947. The Adivasi communities have suffered the brunt of the minerals boom. Iron, uranium, coal and bauxite plants scar their lands, pollute their rivers

- Akaitcho Territory, Denendeh (Dene Territory, Northwest Territories Canada) are under threat from a proposed diamond mine to be constructed within their traditional territory by BHP. If the mine goes ahead, the last remaining free-ranging cariboo herd in the world will be disrupted in their migration role. The Dene rely heavily on the cariboo for their food.

...In recent times, seven Indigenous nations have disappeared from our lands in Russia. Who knows or cares about them?...

Here below a photo of all participants at the Consultation.

Following the Consultation the WCC issued a press release:

BREAKTHROUGH CONSULTATION FOR INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

In an unprecedented event, with which the World Council of Churches (WCC) was closely associated, the largest global gathering of Indigenous People ever to be held in Britain took place in London (6-16 May 1996). Forty-five Indigenous representatives, from Indigenous nations and communities around the world concerned with mining, formed an alliance to plan a coordinated response to the increasing encroachment on their lands by multinational mining companies.

Sharon Venne, representing the Dene Nation in Canada, said at a Press Conference held at the House of Commons: *"The consultation was a breakthrough for Indigenous Peoples in that we are now setting our own agenda. Our agenda is not being set by governments or multinationals. We are not merely having to react to what they have said or done. We are setting the agenda ourselves."*

Participants identified eleven 'HotSpots' where Indigenous Peoples are fighting the destruction of their cultures and their nations.

Mikhail Todyshev representing the Shors People said, *"In recent times, seven Indigenous nations have disappeared from our lands in Russia. Who knows or cares about them?"*

Venne continued: *"We now have formed an Indigenous international communications network, something we have never had before. In the past we have always had information after an event or after the mining multinationals have began their work. Now we are more prepared for quick and efficient distribution of information before things happen."*

For more than thirty years, mining has been singled out by Indigenous communities as one of the most destructive forces with which they have to contend. Indigenous Peoples and their territory form an inseparable unity; mining threatens this unity by denying land rights, invading cultural domains, usurping essential resources, and degrading the quality of soil, air and, above all, water on which Indigenous Peoples depend for their survival. Indigenous women, particularly, are prime victims, e.g. from both uranium mining, and mercury, used for gold extraction, which damage the reproductive system. They also suffer from the destruction of food-gathering habitats and the blight of male-dominated mining towns.

The world mining industry has become disproportionately dependent on exploiting Indigenous Peoples' territory:

- well over half the world's uranium has, since 1940, come from their lands;
- by 2010 AD, about half the global copper and gold supply will come from Indigenous Peoples' territories.

The consultation originated with a call from Australian Aboriginal people during a WCC visit in 1993. *"We need a conference to share information with Indigenous Peoples fighting the same companies all over the world"*, they said.

This month's consultation was the result, and the WCC supported Indigenous Peoples as they planned and brought together the 45 Indigenous campaigners from North America, Australia, Latin America, Russia, Scandinavia, Asia and Africa. The WCC welcomes the opportunity to move beyond statements of solidarity to practical support for concrete action by Indigenous Peoples. Support for this consultation also came from a number of churches and partner agencies and from the Danish and Norwegian governments.

A copy of the Declaration issued by the Consultation and the list of 'HotSpots' are available from Rev. Bob Scott, WCC Programme to Combat Racism.

WCC PUBLICATIONS

TURN TO GOD, REJOICE IN HOPE

The title echoes the theme set for the eighth assembly of the WCC planned for September 1998 in Harare, Zimbabwe. It is a series of seven bible studies on the theme, six meditations and a collection of liturgical aids, designed to help congregations, study groups and individuals to use the Bible to prepare for the Harare assembly.

The theme of the assembly evokes a wealth of biblical imagery for commemorating the past, with an eye to the challenges the churches face together at the dawn of the new millenium.

Order from WCC Publications: ISBN 2-8254-1185-X, 102pp, 1996, SFr9.90

DID I BETRAY THE GOSPEL?

THE LETTERS OF PAUL AND THE PLACE OF WOMEN

by S. Wesley Ariarajah

The many teams which have been visiting the WCC member churches in the middle of this Ecumenical Decade of Churches in Solidarity with Women have disclosed concern, uncertainty and sharp disagreement regarding the Bible's teaching on the place of women in the church and the relationship betwen women and men. Central to that debate are several passages in Paul's writings.

WCC deputy General Secretary Wesley Ariarajah writes four imaginary letters from Paul - how he might respond if these vexing questions were posed to him today. He has caught the style of Paul's writings as he writes about the ordination of women to the ministry, violence against women and ways of interpreting scripture to discern God's will. Says Decade coordinator Nicole Fischer, "To keep the line against women, many church leaders use Paul for their justification. Wesley Ariarajah offers a new reading of Paul, in line with the tradition which no church leader can deny."

This is number 70 in the WCC RISK series.

Order from WCC Publications: ISBN 2-8254-1183-3, 58pp, 1996, SFr9.90

NOT ANGELS BUT AGENCIES

AN ECUMENICAL RESPONSE TO POVERTY - A PRIMER

by Michael Taylor

The author is currently the director of Christian Aid in London. He explores what the churches and their agencies have tried, and what they have learned, as they have responded to poverty. He surveys the discussions, debates and decisions, the 'successes' and 'failures' and the great and perplexing open questions surrounding the churdhes' struggle against poverty. Four central issues are examined in depth: the relationship of the churches' aid and development work to their mission and evangelism; the tension between 'offering charity' and 'dealing with root causes'; the ambiguities of power; and the question of whether and how aid offered by Christians differs from that provided by any 'secular' aid agency.

It fits in with the Biblical 'jubilee' vision of a world where injustices are set right and desperate poverty is no more – but will it happen?

This is number 69 in the WCC RISK series and is jointly published with SCM Press Ltd., London.

Order from WCC Publications: ISBN WCC 2-8254-1168-X / ISBN SCM 0-334-02624-5
174 pp, December 1995, SFr15

These publications, as well as the 1996 catalogue, can be ordered from:

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PUBLICATIONS OF INTEREST

CUBA IN FOCUS

In its fourth decade of revolution, Cuba is facing massive challenges. Isolated by a US embargo, abandoned by its former Eastern bloc partners, the island is turning to capitalism to survive the crisis. As foreign businesses and tourists flock to Havana, what is life like for ordinary Cubans mid shortages and sweeping economic reforms? With its fundamental values at stake, what is the future of Cuban socialism in the post-Cold War age?

Cuba in Focus is an authoritative and up-to-date guide to this fascinating country. It explores:

- The history: Independence, US dominance and the 1959 Revolution; the missile crisis and the Bay of Pigs; Che Guevara and the 'New Man'.
- The economy: The sugar industry past and present; market reforms and foreign investment; rationing and the black market.
- The politics: How the communist system works and the role of Fidel Castro; the military, the mass organisations and the dissidents; US hostility, Cuban nationalism and exile politics.
- The culture: Socialism and self-expression; Afro-Cuba and religious belief; youth culture and salsa; the architecture of Old Havana.

Cuba in Focus is the fourth in a series of guides, covering the countries of South and Central America and the Caribbean. Published by the Latin America Bureau, 1 Amwell Street, London EC1R 1UL, U.K. (ISBN 0 906156 95 5)

1997: HONG KONG'S STRUGGLE FOR SELFHOOD

by Rev. Kwok NaiWang

Hong Kong's Struggle for Selfhood interprets Hong Kong's transition and describes the life of the community's grassroots people in one of Asia's original Newly Industrialized Countries or NICs and illuminates the "false promise of greater wealth for all if one achieves NIChood."

His message is that more wealth is created but that it is unevenly and unfairly distributed. This experience is especially important to share with other Asians, as most countries in the region are racing to achieve NIC status as quickly as possible and to embrace its ideology of accumulating wealth through rapid export-oriented industrialization.

The book is intended to stimulate awareness about the 1997 issue in Hong Kong, which has so far received little attention on the agenda of activists inside as well as outside of Asia. For, as the last chapter of this book explains, both those in Hong Kong and those abroad who cherish the selfdetermination of people have a role to play in ensuring that Hong Kong's initial steps toward selfhood are sustained.

published by Documentation for Action Groups in Asia (DAGA), Hong Kong.
ISBN 9627250198, March 1996.
Price: US $10 (inclusive mailing and bank charges)

Documentation for Action Groups in Asia (DAGA)
96, 2nd District, Pak Tin Village
Mei Tin Road, Shatin, N.T., Hong Kong
Phone: (852) 2697 1917
Fax : (852) 2697 1912
Email : daga@asiaonline.net

THE END OF WORK

THE DECLINE OF THE GLOBAL LABOUR FORCE AND THE DAWN OF THE POST-MARKET ERA.

by Jeremy Rifkin

The author illustrates that the soaring productivity advances made possible by new technologies are bringing the world economy close to cataclysm. The overproduction of goods and a worldwide drop in purchasing power threaten a repetition of the conditions that led to the Great Depression of the 1930s. But Rifkin argues that there is still time to avoid economic collapse. He describes how twenty-first century technologies could potentially liberate humanity from long hours of work and create conditions for a new, more humane social order. Whether the current technology revolution succeeds in freeing people for a life of stewardship and increased leisure or only adds to the international unemployment crisis will depend on how well society plans for the transition in a post-market era.

PUBLICATIONS OF INTEREST

Redefining the role of the individual in a society in which most people are no longer workers is the seminal issue of the coming age.

Jeremy Rifkin is an activist and philosopher and currently president of the Foundation on Economic Trends, in the USA.

Published by G.P.Putnam's Sons, New York: ISBN 0-87477-779-8, 341pp, January 1996.

FROM VICIOUS TO VIRTUOUS CIRCLES

GENDER AND MICRO-ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT

by Linda Mayoux

This is an occasional paper published by the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development and the United Nations Development Programme and was released for the 4th World Conference on Women in Beijing.

The author reviews some of the past and current experience of micro-enterprise programmes for women: training, credit and producer groups and co-operatives. Although there are some successes, the evidence indicates that the majority of programmes fail to make any significant impact on women's incomes. Mayoux argues that the diversity of the small-scale sector on the one hand, and the complexity of constraints posed by poverty and inequality on the other, make the likelyhood of any easy 'blueprint' for successful micro-enterprise development extremely slim.

Linda Mayoux is currently working with the Open University, Milton Keyes, United Kingdom.

Available from UNRISD, Palais des Nations, 1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland,
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For additional information about Operation Crossroads Africa and its programs on the Internet, please go to:

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With kind regards,
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Echoes apologises for the delayed publication of this issue.

This was, in large part, due to recent staff and programme cuts in the WCC.

However it is hoped to publish another Echoes before the end of the year – this one featuring some of the case studies of the Unit III Theology of Life process. This will coincide with the Unit III Commission meeting and Theology of Life gathering to be held in Nairobi, Kenya in January, 1997

Copies of ECHOES can be ordered from the Unit III publications office at the WCC. The average cost of producing and mailing ECHOES is of US$ 5 (equivalent to SFr 7.-) per copy. Readers who can afford it are strongly encouraged to contribute. However, **please note** that any contributions under SFr 20.- (US$ 15.00) actually costs us more to cash than it is worth.

Individuals willing to express their commitment to the Unit III for Justice, Peace and Creation may also contribute in the same way.

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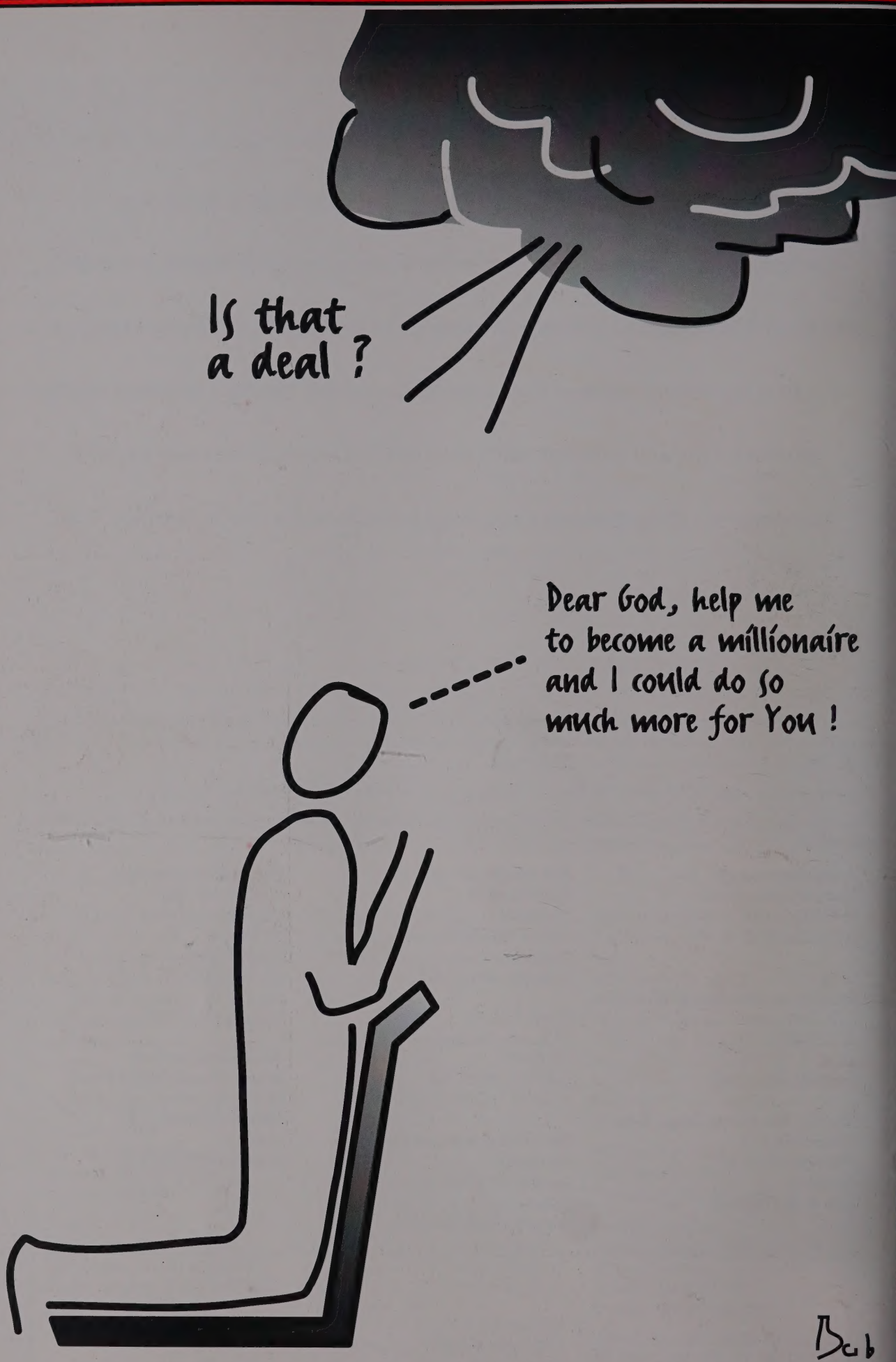
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